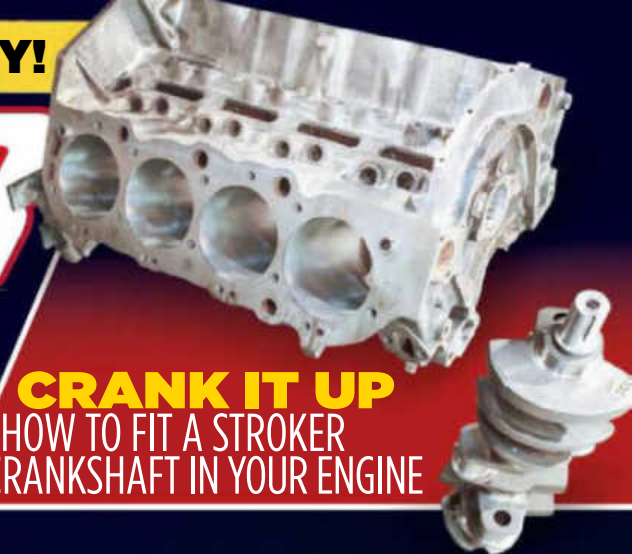


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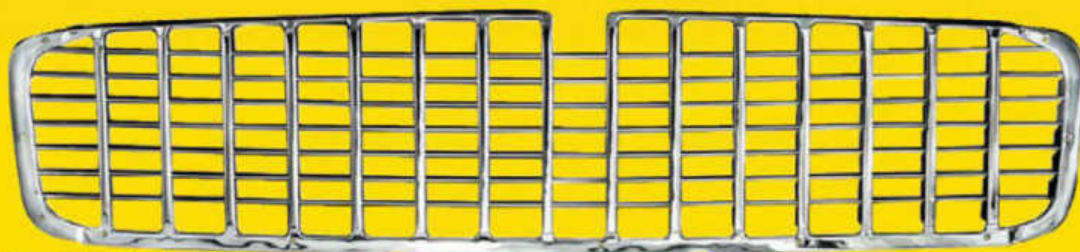
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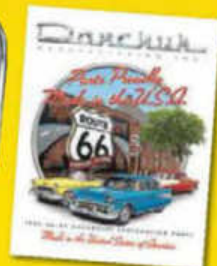
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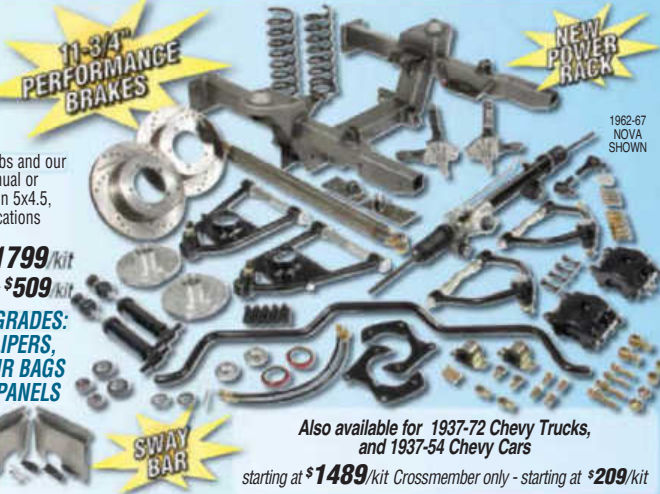
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**On The Cover:** Ken Cook's 1962 Impala is a knockout he dreamed of owning for many years. With the help of the team from Gearhead Garage, his dreams were realized and this fullsize Chevy is now ready for daily-driver duty. Photography by Richard Le.



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## WHAT MAKES THE LS ENGINE SO GREAT?

Are you suffering from an overdose of LS engines? If so, we get it. Those things are everywhere! In the last 10 years, the LS market has absolutely exploded and we now see them nestled between the fenders of everything from show cars to all-out racing machines. As their price point descends even further, and as the aftermarket continues to make their transplant into all varieties of vehicles easier and easier, naysayers will have to come to terms with the fact that they are simply not going away.

So, whether you are still suspect of new technology or ready and raring to drop an LS powerplant into your ride, I thought it would be neat to give you a little background from an engineering standpoint of what has lead to the overwhelming proliferation of LS engines in hot rod culture.

An engine is just an air pump, right? Air goes in, fuel is added, stuff blows up ... horsepower happens. Right? We've all heard some form of that adage but, in reality, there's a heckuva lot more going on in there than that. And, the LS engine series combines a host of modern technological advances to optimize internal engine efficiency.

For starters, the pistons are of a hypereutectic alloy that is much stronger and more thermally stable than the cast pistons used in Gen I small-blocks. The aforementioned thermal stability allows the pistons to be installed with less piston-to-wall clearance, which reduces wear and helps bore sealing. Also, the pistons are fitted with a thinner, metric ring pack that not only reduces friction and blow-by, but also, again, helps bore sealing.

Moving down the line, the connecting rods used in LS platforms are of a powder-forged design. They have a cracked cap that—by means of an irregular mating surface—allows the rod cap to align precisely with the big-end, helping equalize bearing wear, and they are far stronger than production rods from earlier engine architectures.

The production LS crankshafts are tough pieces with relocated thrust bearings (now in the middle of the block) and have been proven durable to near quadruple-digit horsepower outputs.


The real shining star of the LS bottom end is the six-bolt main caps. While early LS1s necessitated the additional cap fasteners to hold the somewhat-flexible block in shape, the later LS3 and iron LS platforms were catapulted to god-like status thanks to the Herculean strength of the rigid bottom-end design. The best part, all LS engines offer the six-bolt cap configuration. No more searching for a four-bolt block or machining a two-bolt block for aftermarket mains.

So, we've established that the bottom end of an LS engine has got quite a few things going for it over traditional small-blocks—from the factory anyway. But, if that was the only improvement

we would have never seen the wave of LS-swappery that we have. After all, the old-school small-block has the most abundant aftermarket of any engine platform ever produced. And why change up your whole SBC engine combo for a little more strength when an aftermarket bottom end is under \$1,000? It just doesn't make sense. Unless, of course, that engine comes with the single best Chevrolet top end design ever conceived. Then the stars begin to align.

The real pièce de résistance of the LS family is the cylinder head and valvetrain components. In a nutshell, this is what allows them to make obscene power with very little modification. The heads come right out of the factory with a 15-degree valve angle. Price out a 15-degree small-block head and you'll see why that is such a big win for the LS. In addition to improved valve geometry, the LS line has replicated ports—gone are the Gen I's mirrored port configuration that had different runner sizing for cylinders 3 and 5, and 4 and 6. The new style allows every runner to be symmetrical, and as such, gives every cylinder an equal opportunity for airflow. A stock-ish LS head flows in the neighborhood of 250-280 cfm—with exceptional low-lift flow—that is well into the territory of pricey aftermarket small-block heads. Ported stock LS heads have been proven to move over 300 cfm of air, and guess what, they are already aluminum!

The valvetrain design for the Gen III-IV engines retains the pushrods we hold so dear, but also remedies all of the high-rpm instabilities associated with older-style, stud-mounted rockers. LS rockers are still stud mounted but are much more stable thanks to a rocker cradle, and also offer a 1.7:1 ratio (compared to the 1.46:1 of its older relatives). No more pinning rocker studs, machining for screw-in studs, or adding rocker girdles. The LS valvetrain is 7,000-rpm capable right out of the gate. GM also incorporated beehive springs, which reduce valvetrain mass, and increased the base circle diameter of the camshaft to prevent core flex and allows for more aggressive lobe profiles. Oh, did we mention all LS engines have factory-equipped roller lifters? We can show you hundreds of dyno tests that verify just how beneficial roller cams are, and with the LS, there's no need to spend \$1,000 on a retrofit kit.

I could go on and on ... but at this point you probably get the point. Those LS engines are good stuff. But, if you're hanging on to your first-gen small-block with a death grip, not yet ready to make the jump, that's just fine. Knowing that there is something better out there doesn't diminish the things we love one bit. 





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That said, I think the time has come for us to pay tribute to what has to be the greatest all-time custom wheel design ever, the five-spoke mag. And what better thing to do than take a little trip back through time and review what I think are some of the custom wheel industry's all-time greatest five-spoke design variations.

One more thing. I'd like to wish the Cragar SS a big, happy 50th birthday and congratulations for surviving one-half a century in an environment where most don't last a year. Remember those goofy spinner hubcaps Sprewell Racing used to sell ... didn't think so. 





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# ALTAMONT

THIS 572-POWERED '55 APPEARED IN A FOG OF BURNING RUBBER



John Gilbert Richard Le

**T**here must be at least 31 different flavors when it comes to choosing how to build a car. On the extreme opposite end of trailer queens and the pampered life those cars live, plugged into battery tenders and riding in climate-controlled enclosed trailers, there's the show cars that get their wheels run off. A great example of a guy that owns a slew of super neat cars and enjoys them all right down to the rubber nubs left clinging to the rear wheels is George Barby of Livermore, California.

On the day of the photo shoot, the first indication George and his ZZ572-powered '55 Chevy were about to arrive was the sound of a screaming engine emerging from a fog of burning rubber. From George's first car, a 1969 Pontiac GTO he bought at 17 years old with paper route money, it's always been about enjoying a badass ride. George still owns the '69 Goat to this day, and said it's still running the over-the-top nasty engine he built for it about two wives ago.

There's a string of very interesting rides in George's fleet, including two

split-window Corvettes, a '47 Dodge Power Wagon, a '48 GMC COE, more Corvettes, a Harley-Davidson, and on it goes, but our focus here is the '55 Chevy Bel Air George bought from the guy that bought it from builder Scott Dempsey.

By trade, Scott Dempsey has been doing vinyl graphics at Trimline, his Fort Lauderdale, Florida, shop for over 30 years, but when Scott gets home it's all about building a custom car or motorcycle from the ground up in his two car garage.



# CRUISER



Scott ditched the '55 Bel Air's original frame and opted for a Morrison GT Sport chassis engineered for a competent DIY guy or a pro builder to install under a 1955-'57 Chevrolet. A lot of the time-consuming steps such as plumbing or fabricating exhaust, or determining where brackets need to go on a one-off build have been solved by AME (Art Morrison Enterprises). The end result is years can be cut off from the time it takes to complete a scratch build, and it's a proven fact the car is going to handle right.

In front, the AME independent front suspension consists of tubular upper and lower control arms, damped with Strange coilover shocks. George upgraded the brakes shortly after he bought the '55 with Wilwood six-piston calipers and 14-inch rotors in front and Wilwood four-piston calipers and 14-inch disc brakes in the rear. For power brakes, a Hydratech hydraulic brake assist system is in place to eliminate sweating whether or not the engine is producing enough vacuum. Quicker steering over the Tri-Five's famously

sloppy original recirculating ball steering box is thanks to an AGR power steering rack-and-pinion setup. To keep the '55 flat while George pitches it sideways and burns the tires off, there's front and rear heavy-duty swaybars. The swaybars also come in handy for high-speed friskiness on Northern California's winding backroads.

At the rear, the AME triangulated four-bar suspension is tied to a Chris Alston Chassisworks Fab9 rearend packing 3.89 gears with an Auburn posi unit. Strange Engineering coilover





shocks damp the ride. Where the rubber meets the road, George's '55 rolls on Colorado Custom Slater 18x8 billet wheels shod with 255/40/18 Nitto NT555 tires in front and 20x11 wheels shod with 275/35/20 tires.

Car builder Scott Dempsey's selection of an AME GT Sport chassis with its available options was part of a well thought out time saving plan that carried under the hood by specifying a Chevrolet Performance ZZ572 for the powerplant. For spark, an MSD distributor handles the ignition, and an 1,150-cfm Dominator carb pours in the required 110-octane race gas. A prerequisite for any big-block install into an AME Tri-Five chassis, the firewall







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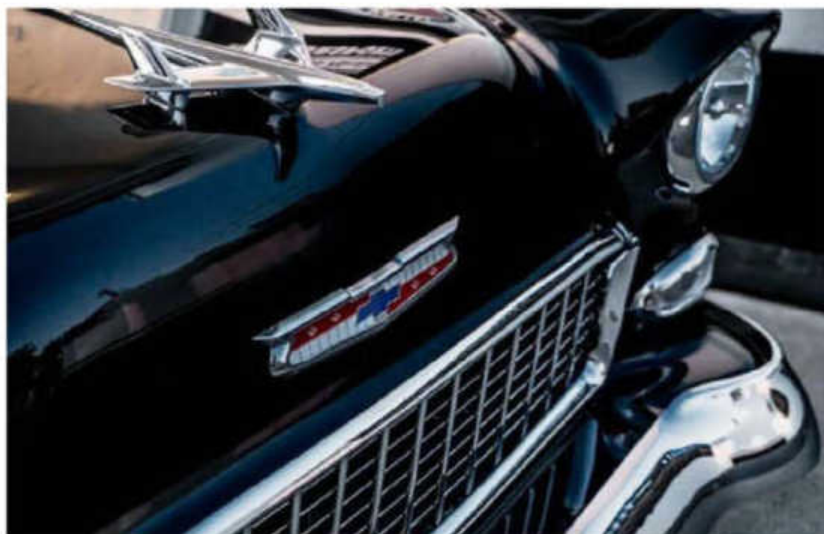


received modifications to provide clearance for the fire-breathing ZZ572. Spent exhaust leaves the engine through a pair of AME stainless steel headers, flowing into polished 2 1/2-inch stainless steel exhaust pipes and on through a pair of MagnaFlow stainless steel mufflers.

George's engine is the 720-horsepower ZZ572/720R, which has a 12.0:1 compression ratio, so cooling the ultimate dual-purpose car takes place with a PRC radiator with dual 12-inch SPAL fans plus a PRC A/C condenser to exchange heat for the Vintage Air air-conditioning. A Billet Specialties' Tru Trac serpentine belt conversion kit handles all the chores of driving a power steering pump, air-conditioning compressor, alternator, and aluminum short-style water pump.

The transmission behind George's ZZ572 is a beefed 700-R4 with a 3,500-stall Hughes converter built by ATF of Davie, Florida. Shifting takes place using a Retro Tek paddle shifter.

Like the radical ZZ572 drivetrain, to keep the over-the-top theme going, the interior and exterior of George's '55 were executed one step beyond as well. The '55's interior work was performed by A.J. Gisonda's Street Seats in New



Port Richey, Florida, and black leather was combined with suede. Incorporated into the leather upholstery there's a 3,800-watt sound system based around an Alpine CDA-9886 head unit, amplified with two JL Audio amps feeding an assortment of MB Quartz speakers, including a massive sub.

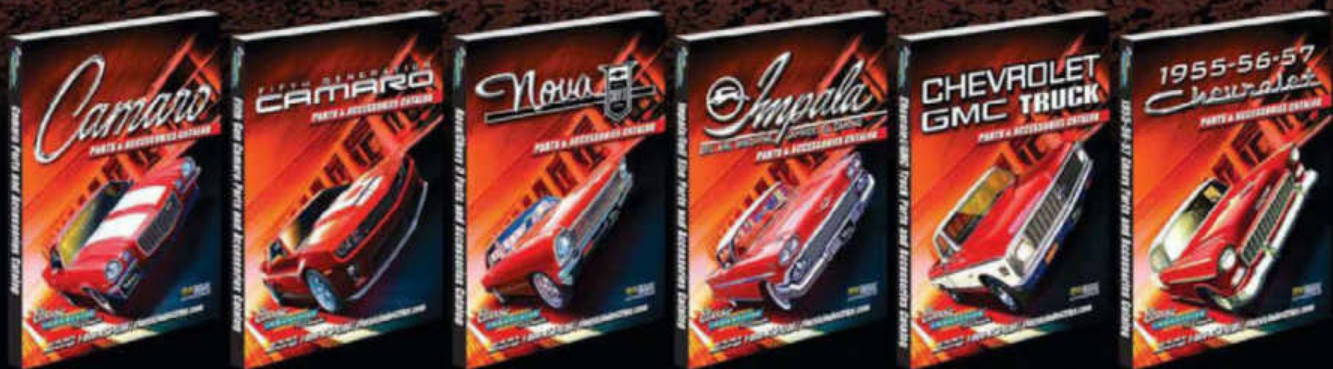
For climate control, a necessary consideration for a black-on-black car, ice-cold A/C comes from Vintage Air. In front of the Flaming River tilt

steering column, the black package Bel Era dash cluster from Classic Instruments not only adds a tasty touch in the looks department, but CI's accurate instrumentation keeps close account of the ZZ572 and all the systems supporting it.

The hardest color to get the bodywork right under is pure black. Black reveals every little imperfection other colors hide, and black's exactly the color Luke at Exotica Body Works in Davie,



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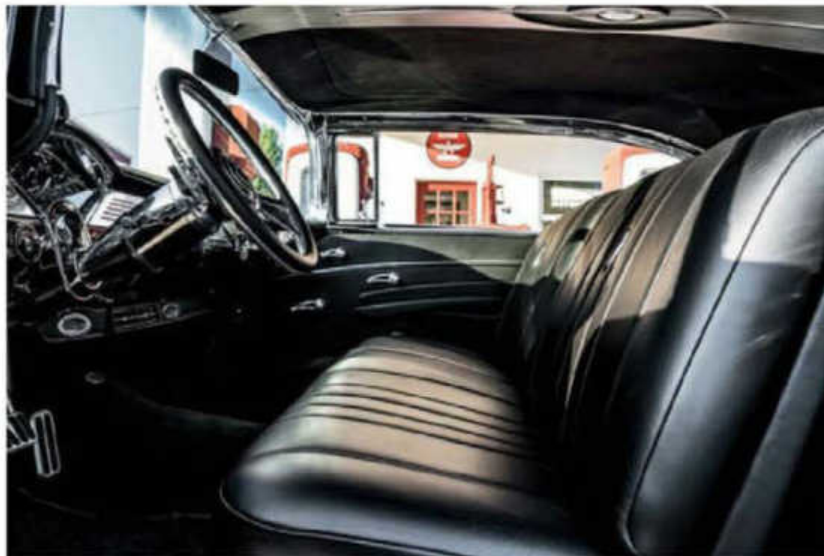
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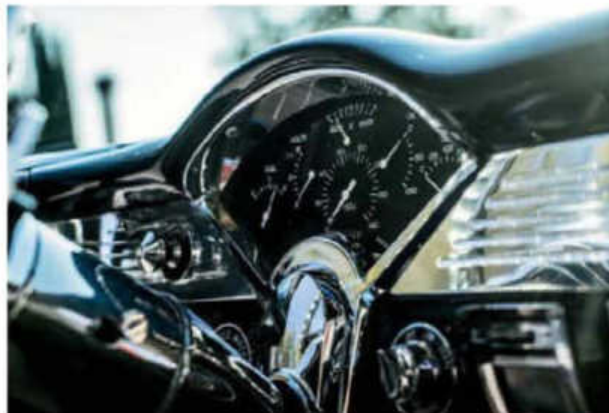


Florida, shot the '55 in. As a rule, Exotica specializes in European exotics and luxury cars, but in the same way as the Ferrari Enzos and Mercedes Gullwings they've refinished, the '55 was sprayed using Axalta's German paint brand: Standox.

We all do, but the square world might not understand George's propensity for roasting the tires off his '55 every chance he gets. This inclination doesn't make George a bad man. To the contrary; George and his wife, Heather, are members of the Altamont Cruisers, a car club that's out to do some good in the world, and we'd say that's a redeeming quality. 🍷



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# SECOND CHANCE





# DAVE RUDAN'S WILD 1955 CHEVY REPLACES THE ONE THAT SLIPPED AWAY IN HIS YOUTH

John Machaqueiro the Author

**L**ife is paved with stories of things that we have managed to let slip through our fingers. For the average gearhead, that usually means a car from our youth. For Pennsylvanian Dave Rudan, the one that slipped away was a '55 Chevy. He recalls, "I put together a '55 back in the '70s that was a show car/race car before the term Pro Street even existed." It was his first project—its style choice influenced heavily by the black '55 in the

movie *American Graffiti*. Originally destined as a show car, it was a continuous work in progress for a number of years. With the passage of time it became less of a show car as it gradually morphed into a streetable race car. As that transformation evolved the horsepower increased while many of the steel body panels gave way to fiberglass replacements in an effort to reduce weight. After a number of years doing double duty at shows and dragstrips, Dave's focus shifted from the '55 to a five-window '34 Ford and a 7-second dragster. With too many toys in the stable, a new home was found for the Chevy in the mid '80s.

For Dave, the '55 was slowly relegated to memory status; however, a photo of it hanging in his garage was a daily reminder of the past. His wife, Marcia, knew him like an open book and was aware of how much he missed his first project. In 1990, with his 35th birthday on the horizon, she enlisted the help of Dave's longtime friend Bill McElroy and both went on a mission to find another '55 to surprise him with on his birthday. Weeks of searching eventually dug up a worthy candidate. She made the purchase and had the car stashed at Bill's shop. As the date approached, the car was dressed up with balloons and wheeled into Dave's home garage. With his brothers gathered, the car was given to him on his birthday.

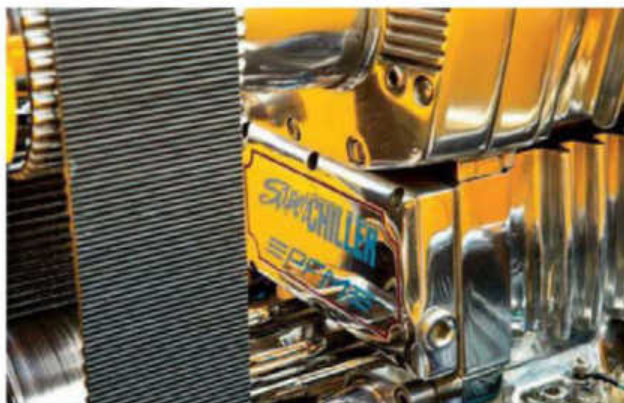
It didn't take more than a few minutes upon first setting eyes on the car before Dave knew exactly what he wanted to do with it, even if it was on the rough side. His wife, while filled with good intentions, didn't exactly find him the best specimen to work with. He candidly admits, "It was a Fred Flintstone mobile. The floors were rotted out, and it was still wearing its original paint. It was a mess."

By the middle of 1991, he began to work on the car. Unlike many guys who have the vision but limited fabrication skills, Dave has the skills and was able to do much of the fabrication and assembly work at home. Since it was structurally compromised due to rust, his first task was to install new floors and repair any major rust damage. Once that was sorted, it was sent out to be chemically stripped. Now with a rust-free body, the task of transforming the car began.

Keeping the classic lines of the '55 was a key point. Particular emphasis on the visual appeal of the engine compartment was a top priority, as was the stance. He also wanted the chassis to be able to handle the 900-plus horses from the big-block that would eventually get tucked up front. That was accomplished, at the rear, with







the installation of an S&W Race Cars rear frame with ladder bars and coilovers. Up front, a Fatman Fabrications subframe was added along with a complete '85 Corvette suspension and power rack-and-pinion steering. Some subtle body alterations were also part of the plan. Dave wanted to slide the engine back so he recessed the firewall 12 inches. This eliminated the cowl and also allowed him to create a longer hood that hinged forward. At the rear, the license plate was frenched into the trunk lid. As the body came together, it became clear that some panels needed to be replaced. The sheetmetal removed from his first '55 that he had stashed away saw a new life on this car. The final body and paintwork was done at Bill's shop, appropriately called Bill McElroy Auto Body in Bensalem, Pennsylvania. There they applied the PPG basecoat/clearcoat Cape Cod Yellow paint.





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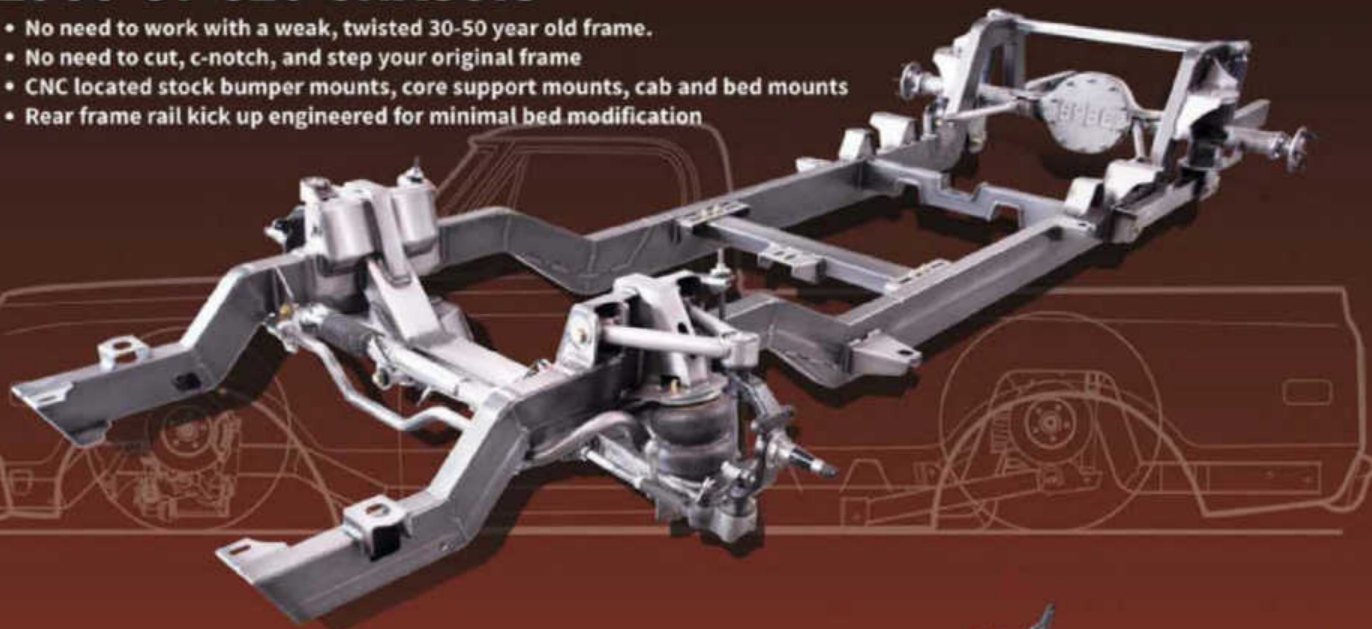
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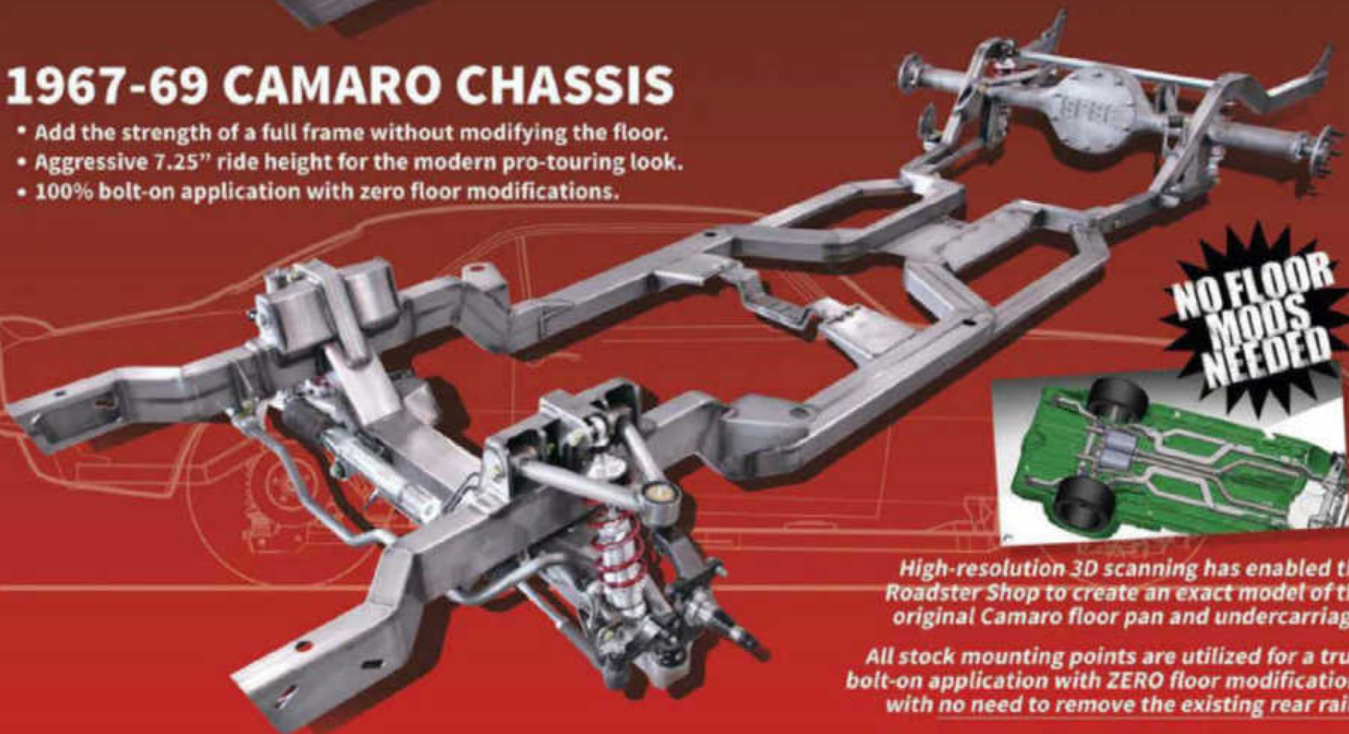
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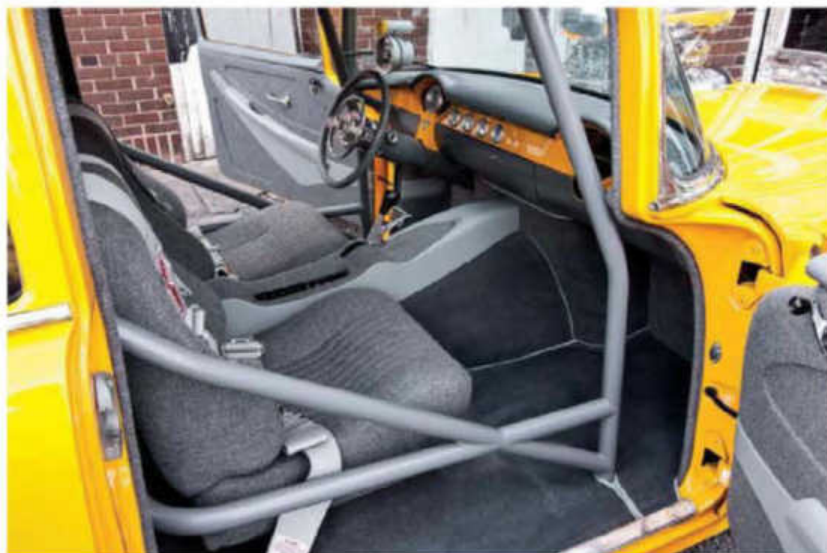
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Under the hood, Dave went big with a balanced and blue-printed 509-cubic-inch big-block stuffed with 8.75:1 CP-Carillo pistons, forged crank, and Lunati solid cam. At the top, Chevy aluminum heads and a B&M Mega Charger blower crowned with a pair of Holley 4150 HP carbs help produce a stout 900 horses at the rear wheels. Those ponies are dispensed via a GM Turbo 400 with a 3,200-stall converter and a narrowed Ford 9-inch rearend with 4.10 gears and a Detroit Locker. Spent gases depart via a set of homemade headers that dump into 4-inch steel pipes mated to a set of Flowmaster mufflers.

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Inside, Dave had Hot Rod Garage in Denton Maryland, install a set of TEA's Custom Hot Rod Seats flanking a custom console. They used a combination of gray leather and tweed to cover the front buckets, rear bench, and custom door and side panels. Safety was also addressed with the installation of Simpson five-point harnesses and an S&W Race Car rollcage. Dave installed the rollcage with the assistance of his friend Fred Cutaia.

Since he was doing all the fabrication and engine work on the car, it took him six years to complete this '55. The 7-second dragster was still a plaything that kept him occupied during the summer months so any work done on the '55 was saved for the long Pennsylvania winter months.

With no desire to have this Chevy as a race car, Dave has instead focused on traveling to as many shows as possible around the country with his family. Too much sweat equity has been invested, so there are no plans to let this '55 get away. 



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# NOT SO S

THE TCI-BACKED "LITTLE SWEETIE" NOVA  
HAS A MEAN STREAK A MILE WIDE





# SWEET

by Evan Perkins and Mary Pozzi with the Super Chevy Staff and Robert McGaffin

**W**hen the team from Total Cost Involved (TCI) showed up at the Streets of Willow Springs Raceway for the 2015 Super Chevy Suspension & Handling Challenge, presented by Falken Tires, they told us their light-blue 1963 Nova was nicknamed Little Sweetie. But, when the Caldwell's Performance-built 427-inch small-block fired up for its first on-track stint, it sounded downright wicked.

Before we dive into the car's full armament of suspension parts, it's necessary to touch on the rich, sentimental backstory and life of the car.

"Back in the day, me and my dad were building sister cars," said the car's owner and TCI employee Evan Dalley. "Both of our cars were here at the shop and TCI prototyped the first four-link on Dad's Nova."

While the car was in TCI's shop, things took an unfortunate turn and Evan's dad was diagnosed with stage-four lung cancer. He was given only a few short months.

Evan took one look at the Nova up on the lift and knew it just couldn't be finished on his dad's forced timeline. "That car needed so much work," said Dalley. Rather than give up on building the Nova his dad had always wanted, Evan brought home a new Nova that was closer to completion.

They stripped down the old car and transferred all the parts to the new one, which already had a paintjob. Elegance Auto Trim did a quickie stock interior on the car, and a disc brake kit was added to the otherwise stock front end. In a month, the car was presented to Evan's dad for his birthday. "Dad drove the car everywhere and would pick my kids up from school in it. That's where the Little Sweetie nickname came from. It was just a nice, little cruiser with a 250ci six-cylinder in it. I added a 700-R4 transmis-

sion and a station wagon rearend in it with a 3.30 gear and the thing went everywhere, great."

Evan's dad ended up persevering for another 2-and-a-half years, enjoying the Nova the whole time, before the inevitable happened.

"When he passed, I got the car back and just stored it for a while, then I pulled it out and started driving it again," said Dalley. It was 8 years later that the Nova underwent the radical transformation into the barnstorming autocrosser you see before you.

The Nova is now armed to the teeth with TCI's latest and greatest suspension underpinnings, such as their Pro-Touring independent front suspension (IFS) and their Torque Arm rear suspension setup. RideTech three-way adjustable shocks ride on all four corners and big 13-inch Wilwood brakes help rein in the speed.

Power comes by way of an AFR-headed, 427ci, Dart-based small-block and is sent through a McLeod RSX clutch to a Muncie transmission and a Gear Vendors Overdrive.

"It's still the Little Sweetie but it's a little nasty now," laughs Dalley.

And boy, is this car driven. In addition to the track time it garnered at the 2015 Suspension & Handling Challenge, this Nova sees quality competition time at just about any venue that will let Dalley through the gates.

"Oh, I drive the car," says Dalley. "I go to as many autocross events as I can and I'm not afraid to drive the car on the streets. I've been to more events since the Challenge and finally bought a set of better seats!"

Now that we know the story, and what makes it go, it's time to let our expert ringer, Mary Pozzi, preach the gospel of speed from behind the wheel.



## WHAT MAKES IT HANDLE

**Front Suspension:** TCI Pro-Touring IFS

**Steering:** Power rack-and-pinion conversion

**Brakes:** Wilwood 13-inch rotors with six-piston calipers front and 13-inch rotors with four-piston calipers rear

**Rear Suspension:** TCI Torque Arm Suspension, RideTech shocks

**Tires:** Falken Azenis RT615K 265/35/18 front, 295/40/18 rear

**Wheels:** American Racing VF-495 18x9 front, 18x10 rear





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## MARY POZZI FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT


My trip around Streets wasn't without some minor ergonomic concerns as the Nova's interior wasn't best suited for aggressive track flogging. Sporting a doughy feel in the seat that no amount of harness cinch could eliminate was the first problem, and I found it extremely difficult to position the car on-track while keeping myself solidly planted.

While this limited my testing abilities, it must be recognized that this is a street car, and on a long-distance drive I'd much rather my butt be softly nestled in the foam-lined bucket I had today than in something with a more solid, butt-numbing feel. I know I'm picking nits here but that's my job!

With limited track laps, I concentrated on what I could glean from each. Seating and harness issues aside, I found the Nova to be pretty close to the other TCI car I absolutely love: their '68 Camaro I tested several years previous. The ride was compliant yet provided a solid feel, and rolling into a corner brought a bit of lean until the suspension set in. Better seating would give a much sharper, knife-edged feel, and I so wished for this. The steering rack used by TCI has an excellent feel and pressure as it remained light and ready for any change of direction. Power got itself to the ground, and the Nova transitioned gracefully from corner to corner. Like most other TCI cars I've tested—and if you ignore the seating—all of the parts worked in synchrony making the Nova quite easy

to drive. I never got a chance to really push this car to see how it reacted when stressed, but then I really didn't want to. The Little Sweetie wasn't built for that, and who was I to treat her roughly? My cool-down "Road Evaluation" lap was the clincher and this is a car that, in its present form, did not disappoint one bit.

Like with other interviews, I asked Evan what his "one thing" was for this car and his father. Evan thought a minute and then softly replied, "It was the Outriders Picnic and the last outing with my dad. We drove this same Nova and I'll never forget his enjoyment of that day!"

With a true competition seat, his is a car I'd drive to events, not trailer. And once there (with a good seat, of course), I'd hammer the hell out of it and grin like the proverbial Cheshire Cat. For Evan, this is his family's "forever car" and will always be the Little Sweetie. 

## HOW'D IT STACK UP?

	SLALOM AVERAGE SPEED	SKIDPAD LATERAL g's	ROAD COURSE LAP TIME
<b>1963 TCI NOVA</b> 3,297 POUNDS	46.9 mph	0.95 g	1:58.47
<b>2015 CAMARO SS 1LE</b> 3,866 POUNDS	47.2 mph	0.96 g	1:53.67

We put the TCI-built Nova through the wringer on the 420-foot slalom course, the Streets of Willow Springs road course and the skidpad. And, because some of those numbers are a little ambiguous for those not familiar with the slalom or road course, we paired the car against a 2015 Camaro SS 1LE for comparison.





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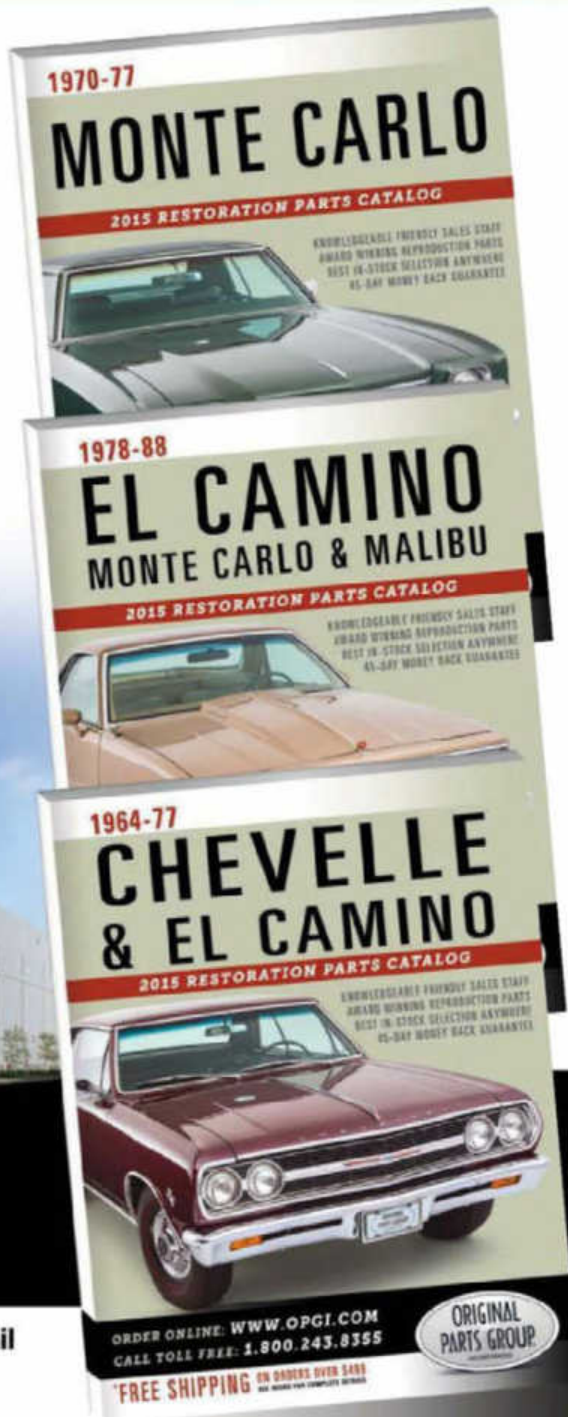
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# DREAMS

**AFTER OVER HALF A CENTURY OF DREAMING, KEN COOK'S 1962 IMPALA BECAME A REALITY, AND HIS DAILY DRIVER**



✍ **Greg Acosta** 📷 **Richard Le**

**T**hey say good things come to those that wait and that patience is a virtue. If ever there were a poster boy for those sentiments, it would be Ken Cook of Sacramento, California. The 71-year-old retired Civil Engineer waited most of his life before getting a badass car: a 1962 Chevy Impala. And when he finally did, he did it right. No corners cut; no expenses spared. Cook had a vision and teamed up with Jason Walroth of Gearhead Garage to turn his dream into reality.

"This is something I've wanted to do for a long time," explained Cook. "I've been a Chevy guy all my life. My first car was a '53 two-door sedan that I drove for I don't know how many years while I went to college and beyond. I grew up in

a Chevy household so that made me partial to Chevys. The 1962 Impala has been a favorite model of mine ever since I graduated high school, which also happened to be in 1962. To me, it is one of the most classic body styles of all time."

It's no surprise that when the time came to start the project, the first order of business was one of the most dreaded—locating the vehicle. "There are cars all over the country, but I really didn't want to have to drive to Kansas City to look at a car. I was really hoping to find something locally. California is still kind of 'the place' to get decent cars, so I thought if I just bided my time a bit I'd find something close by," said Cook, displaying more of his signature patience. The universe rewarded him for his virtue. "A couple of weeks after I started



# REALIZED



my search, one popped up in the local car rag. I went out and looked at it, as did Jason. He gave it a thumbs-up, so I got it. It was in pretty good shape considering it was over half a century old."

Speaking of the age of the car, Cook knew he was going to drive the car every day so he presented a challenge to Walroth and the team at Gearhead Garage. "I had a 2000 Lexus LS430 at the time, and when I first started talking to Jason at Gearhead Garage, I jokingly said, 'This is how I want the car to ride.' I knew it was a tall order to get a 60-plus-year-old car to ride that nice, but this was going to be my everyday driver, so it had to ride decently. It's not a show car or a car that I start up every other month. I drive it every day,

every place, so it needed to be comfortable," Cook related of his design parameters. Being an engineer, his attention to detail, as well as his ideas, were quite grand. Luckily for him, Walroth is the same way. "This is the first specialty car I've ever had. After I got the car, I knew I wanted certain things done to it. I wanted a more modern instrument panel, better interior, and things like that. The car was fitted to me specifically, both in design and measurements. It was exactly the way I wanted it."

The result of 18 months of hard work resulted in a one-of-a-kind 1962 Impala that turns heads. Coated in Ford Toreador Red, the car features a full Roadster Shop chassis with C6 Corvette spindles and double-adjustable coilovers up front





and independent suspension out back. A 427-cubic-inch LS3 that has been significantly warmed over resides between the framers. The engine's output is an estimated 580 horsepower with an equal amount of torque—all with A/C and power steering. "I wanted a bigger engine than the 327 it came with. It was old and tired and had been rebuilt at least once," Cook explained of the genesis for his modern powerplant. "I wanted enough horsepower to know that, when I needed to get on the gas, it had it there. Jason recommended the LS since he's had good success with the transplants."

A set of Hooker Super Comp headers feed into a Blake's Motorsports custom 2.5-inch exhaust featuring a MagnaFlow X-pipe, mufflers, and resonators. Power is sent back through a Tremec TKO 600 transmission and 11-inch Ram single-disc clutch to a Ford 9-inch centersection stuffed full of 3.73

gears and a Detroit Truetrac differential, giving the combo ideal street manners. Circle Racing billet Rallye wheels accent the car's looks, measuring 18x8 in front and 18x9.5 out back. Kore3 C6 Corvette brakes measuring 14 inches up front and 13 inches in back rein in the Impala in both city traffic and spirited jaunts. Inside the car, a modern dash was fitted in-house at Gearhead Garage, and full-power Lexus front seats were installed. "I started the build with a 4L80E automatic transmission; I'm 71 years old. When I first got the car, I was a few years younger, but my thinking was, 'I don't want to be horsing around with a clutch and changing the gears all the time,'" Cook laughed. "The more I drove it, the more the automatic didn't cut it. I got the yearning to shift gears myself. My first four cars were all manual transmission cars, but I had forgotten how much fun it could be."





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Once the car was “done,” it was time for Gearhead Garage to tackle the really custom stuff for Cook. “I really enjoy playing some golf, and since this was set to be my daily driver, I had a special rack built that bolts into the trunk to hold my golf clubs. I never take them out of the car unless I’m using them.” Golf isn’t Cook’s only hobby; he also enjoys pedaling about quite a bit. “I’m also pretty serious into cycling and I wanted to be able to carry my bike around. So again, Jason chopped up a bike rack to make it fit and welded it to the frame in the rear so that everything sits perfectly. My bike is different than most, so not only did Jason have to fit the mount onto the car, he had to fit the mount to the bike itself,” relayed Cook. He also went a step further with it. “It all came out so





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## DREAMS REALIZED

well, I even had the bike frame painted to match the car."

With such an extensive list of modifications, Cook is most proud of the fact that it still looks like a 1962 Impala. "If you look at the car, it looks almost original from the outside. The only real difference is that the mirrors are rectangular instead of round, to give me a better view. Then I added a third brake light. Other than those things, it looks like it did when it sat on the showroom floor in 1962," Cook said, as he recalled his high school dreams. "I also insisted on leaving the Chevy emblem in the middle of the back seat. It was a part of all the cars of the time, and I really wanted to keep that. Even with the modification of the rear seats that makes it more of a two-person seat, I feel like that feature helps the car keep some originality." With the car done and exactly how he wanted it, Cook is currently driving the wheels off of it, between heading to the clubhouse to

get a few holes in, taking off to ride his custom bike, or even just running the day's errands. He says that thumbs up from other car guys follow wherever he goes and is incredibly quick to lav-

ish praise on the team that turned his longtime dreams into a daily driven reality. "Jason and his team deserve the bulk of the credit. The work that they've done is incredible." 📺



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# ONE OF



✎ **Scott Sparrow**  **the Author**

**J**ohn Sutton is a different kind of car enthusiast. His passion for speed and performance didn't start at an early age like a lot of others. In fact, Sutton can't really recall when his love for the automobile became a state of consciousness.

"I guess you can say it just kind of crept up on me," said the 73-year-old Indiana resident. "I was a workaholic my entire life and at some point I decided I needed to slow down a bit and begin enjoying life. I needed a hobby and that hobby became cars," he said.

That was about 20 years ago. In the time since, Sutton has owned a number of different cars, including two pristine '56 Chevys he keeps in his spacious garage along with this incredible '67 Nova—a car he feels represents everything he ever wanted in a show car and driver. "I'd say this is about as far as I want to go with a custom car. I love my two other Chevys, but this car is probably my last project," he added.

Sutton found this "project" roaming the streets of Delphi, Indiana, where he purchased it as a running car, and actually drove it home. "It had the stock 283 in it and a bench seat



# A KIND



**A HOST OF CUSTOM DETAILS MAKE  
THIS 1967 NOVA LIKE NO OTHER**



... it drove really well. It had been kept in a garage for a long time so the body was in great shape," he said. Finding anything in the Midwest over 20 years old with no rust is akin to winning the lottery, and Sutton knew that. "I knew we could do a lot of cool things with this car because it was so clean," he added.

The question Sutton had yet to answer with his new project was what exactly would the finished piece look like? "I had no clue," he joked. There was no plan, no artist's rendering, no "vision" at all for this car when he first took

it to Collins Brothers Automotive in Marion, Indiana. "They did a lot of work on my two '56s, but we really had no idea of what direction we wanted to go in when we started. We just started working on it and talking about it, but there was never a plan put into place of what it would look like when finished," Sutton explained.

"I've seen a lot of these '66 and '67s through the years that had really been fixed up and customized. I really liked what I saw, as well as the body style. There was just something about the Nova that really grabbed my attention."





Sutton did know he wanted a car with a late-model powertrain, and that also handled well. For those wanting to attach a label, the base concept could be best described as Pro Touring. "I'm not sure what I'd call it," he laughed. "All I know is I like it and it turns heads. It's a sweet little car."

With the old suspension removed, Collins Brothers bolted on a Heidts Pro-G front subframe as well as a Pro-G IRS kit for the rear. For horsepower, they utilized a fuel-injected Chevrolet Performance LS3 crate engine from Street & Performance in Mena, Arkansas, along with a 4L70E transmission. "In my other cars I have traditional small-blocks—one with a carburetor and the other with injector stacks. I knew with this







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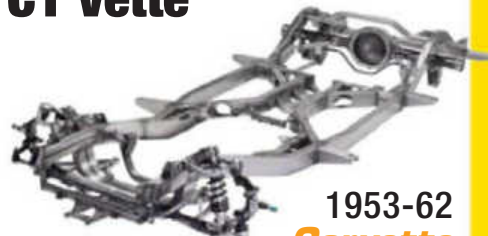
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car I wanted to go with a late-model EFI setup, and the LS3 turned out to be exactly what I wanted. It gives me all the power I could ever need," Sutton stated.

With the basic powertrain installed, at least the mechanical attributes of the car were beginning to take shape, but the cosmetic aspects of the car were yet to be resolved. "I was looking at the car one day and wondered what it would look like if we shaved an inch off the top. The style of the car is fine stock, but the top being as high as it was, made it a bit boxy. I thought if we took an inch off it would make the lines look a bit cleaner and more aerodynamic," he said.

More than happy to bring out the saws and cutting torches, the roof was removed from the car and an inch removed. The end result was exactly what Sutton was looking for. "It turned out to be a bit more (work) than we planned—especially the vent windows. The windshield wasn't bad at all, but eliminating the vent windows and getting the glass to fit was a pain. We were really happy, though, with the way it turned out," he added.

While a purist may not like the idea of chopping the top, the result does give the car a more sinister stance. "If we took more off of it than we did, I think it would have been way too dramatic," Sutton said. Even to those familiar with the '67 Nova, the lowered top isn't glaring, leaving people with a less-trained eye to figure out if it's chopped or not—something Sutton wanted.

Another subtle addition was the small spoiler molded onto the trunk lid, which helps add an aerodynamic flare that isn't over the top—just different enough to catch the eye.

Modifications that do stand out are the vents cut into the fenders just behind the front wheels that pay homage to the C3 Corvette. All someone has to do is look at this Nova's license plate to get an understanding of where this project ended up. "NOVETT" says it all.

"If you put a stock Nova next to this thing, it really stands out. You may not be able to see all the differences when you look at the car alone, but park it next to a stock or even a slightly modified '67 and you can really see the



differences. You know it's had a lot of work done to it. To me, looking at my car I think it looks like it should have when it was produced," he says.

Sutton does admit his tastes may not match those of other people, but he's fine with that. After all, if every car designer and custom shop had the same ideas there would be no room left for ingenuity, right?

"I do enjoy driving it, a lot," admits Sutton. However, he won't say if it drives as nicely as the C7 Z06 he also has in his garage.

"It has the kick I like and it does get plenty of attention. People who see it from the front really have no idea what it is. I'll roll up behind someone and they'll keep looking in the mirror, which is always fun," he says.

"At one point we had a different grille in it, but ended up making what is in there now along with the 7-inch headlamps and the headlamp covers, which when looking at it from the front, can confuse someone," Sutton said.

While he does drive it to shows around his home in Marion, Indiana, Sutton prefers to keep the mileage down and bug gut splatter to a minimum, and thus will trailer the car to shows farther away. "It's one thing to drive it a few miles, but another to drive it hundreds of miles," he said.

Regardless if he drives it or trailers it, when his Nova gets into the fresh air, people who spend the time to look at it closely will see the attention to detail that brought this one-of-a-kind ride to life. **S**

**"I'M NOT SURE WHAT I'D CALL IT, ALL I KNOW IS I LIKE IT AND IT TURNS HEADS. IT'S A SWEET LITTLE CAR." — JOHN SUTTON**



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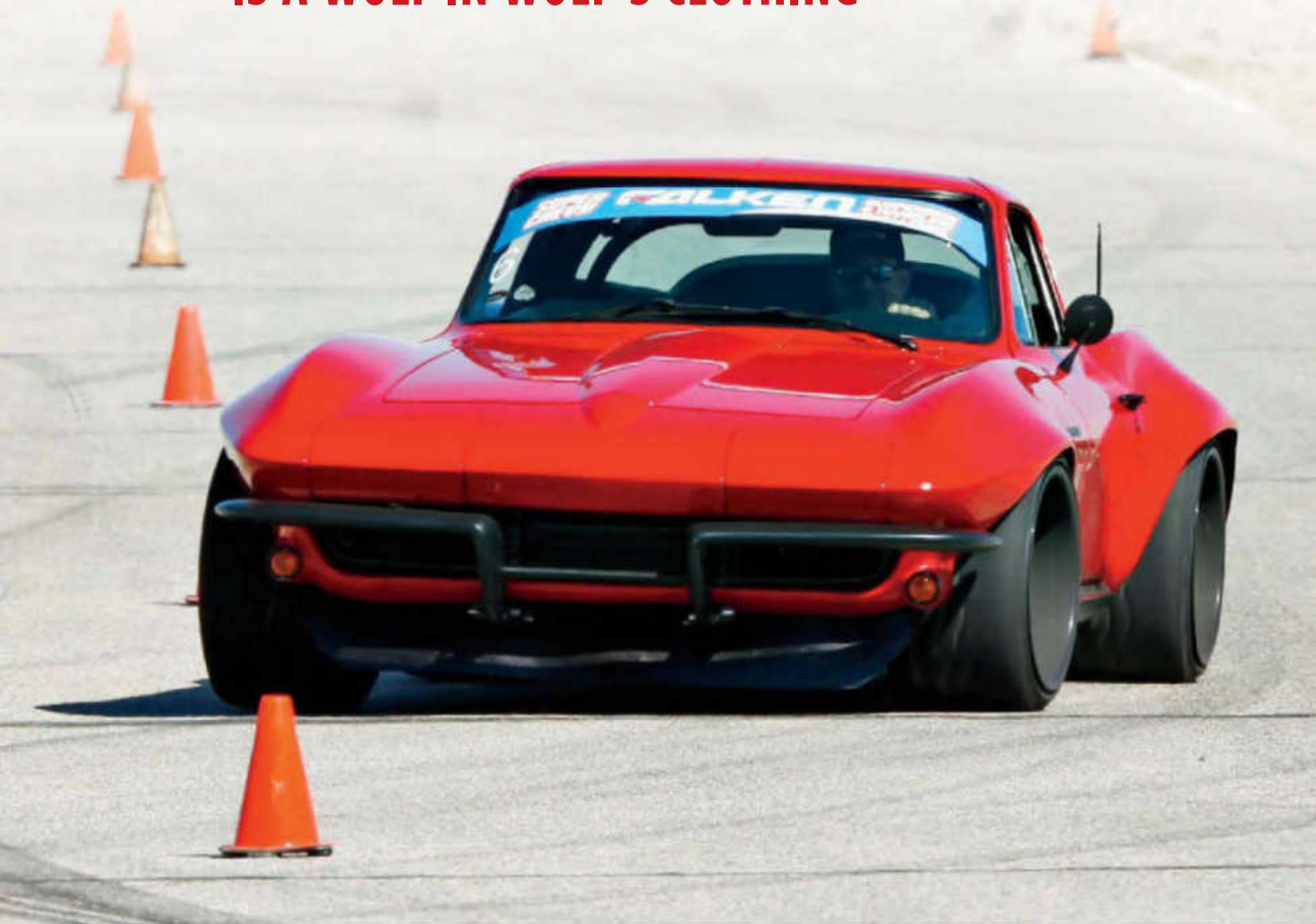
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# ***PROJECT MANAGEMENT***

**THE HOBAUGH'S 1965 VETTE  
IS A WOLF IN WOLF'S CLOTHING**





Let's be honest, classic Corvettes in stock form look a whole lot faster than they actually are. But, in reality, they're just victims of the technology of their era. And, for the most part, were designed more for slicing through a mountain canyon on a Sunday cruise than being wheeled around a road course. But, like any classic, they can be worked over into something that can handle as good as anything being churned out by Chevrolet today.

A great example of this is the 1965 C2 Corvette driven by Brian and Stephen Hobaugh that was brought out to the 2015 Super Chevy Suspension & Handling Challenge, presented by Falken Tires.

This Corvette has been campaigned by the father-son-duo for over 30 years. From the day it left the showroom floor in 1965 it was raced on autocross tracks. Yep, this one-of-771 fuel-injected '65 Corvette was driven off the lot by the original owner, Ron Christianson, and immediately given fender flares for wider tires. In the '70s Larry Park enlarged the rear flares and continued fine-tuning the mostly original suspension. That means around 50 years has been spent sorting this car out—and it shows every time it hits a track. It was even the car Brian learned to drive a manual transmission in. But unlike many Corvettes that have been worked over and given new C5/C6/C7 underpinnings, this one still runs many of the original Chevrolet parts.

The aftermarket parts it does have, such as the Van Steel upper control arms and JRi shocks, were carefully chosen and validated as "working" by installing them and hitting the track. Over time this has created a car that flat out handles. In terms of the exterior, Brian is the general manager of a body shop and was able to further work over the fenders to house the massive 315/30/18 Falken tires mounted on each corner. The larger rollers also let him replace the problematic stock binders with Wilwood six-piston front and four-piston rear calipers paired with 11.75-inch Spec-37 Wilwood rotors. The only other exterior mod is a large Lexan rear spoiler to help tame the Corvette's speed-induced aerodynamic issues.

While many Corvettes like this get modern LS engines, this one is running a vintage 1970 Chevy small-block (don't

worry, the original fuel-injected engine is safely tucked away in storage).

Worked over to 364 inches, this mill was built by S&S Automotive in San Leandro, California, to hold up to the punishment Brian knew he would inflict.

Filled with a 3.625-inch SCAT crank, Crower rods, and Mahle pistons, the V-8 generates

a premium-gas-fueled 11.1:1 compression ratio. The short-block was mated to a set of Brodix heads and topped with a TPIS intake along with a fuel-injection system, while MSD provides the spark and a pair of Hooker headers evacuates the exhaust. The snotty sounding solid-roller small-block puts out 525 hp at 6,400 rpm and 500 lb-ft of twist at 4,700 rpm—more than enough to motivate the 3,170-pound Corvette down the road. Backing this up is an equally "vintage" 1965 M21 trans fitted with a McLeod clutch. It makes for a car that shows how even a few parts, properly installed and tweaked, can really make a difference. Brian and his dad, Steve, have really managed to craft this project into a force to be reckoned with.



## MARY POZZI FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT

I must admit I delayed my drive until I couldn't avoid it any longer as this is "THE CAR" and has huge notoriety. It's been featured in many publications. It's won hugely and is, in many ways, larger than life if you've got even a glint of octane in your veins. And, I knew that Steve and Brian Hobaugh rarely, if ever, let anyone get behind the wheel of their car. I let them know I wasn't going to go goofy or get the red mist, and would take every precaution to ensure that their "forever car" would be returned in the same condition it was given to me. I did this like I did with every other car I tested

## WHAT MAKES IT HANDLE

**Front Suspension:** Van Steel upper control arms, Mike Maier sway bar, coil springs, JRi EC12 double-adjustable shocks

**Steering:** Borgeson recirculating ball

**Rearend:** Stock with 3.90 gears, posi, Van Steel halfshafts

**Brakes:** Wilwood six-piston calipers with 11.75-inch rotors front and four-piston calipers with 11.75-inch rotors rear

**Rear Suspension:** Stock trailing arms, JRi EC12 double-adjustable shocks, stacked leaf springs, no sway bar

**Tires:** Falken Azenis RT615K 315/30/18 front, 315/30/18 rear

**Wheels:** Aristo Collection 18x12 front, 18x12 rear






**SOURCES:**

**Falken Tires**  
 800-723-2553  
 falkentire.com

The brakes were very easy to modulate and provided a smooth, linear response to pedal pressure. Lateral weight transfer was minimal and the chassis felt somewhat stiff, but then this is a performance car driven in competition for the majority of its use. Longitudinally, and under power, weight transfer was amazing and the Corvette had a wonderful ability to put down power smoothly.

I asked Stephen Hobaugh about that “one thing” that is special about the Corvette and the family relationship with it. It was at the 2013 OUSCI and he was walking the paddock area listening to the chatter. “I heard people talking that they thought Brian had

won, and it was at that time I realized just how far we’d come, the history, the fantastic drives, and successes, the close bond between father and son, and it got pretty emotional. I’ll never, ever forget it,” Stephen said. 



this day, by simply working the car on the corners yet not hauling the mail on the straights.

Driving the Corvette was an amazing experience as the car was well-sorted and able to be presented to any corner with confidence. When pushed hard, I found the limit a few times as the rear stepped out but was easily brought back with steering. When overdriven, and yes, I was guilty of this a couple of times, I thought I was saddling an eel. Overall, the Corvette

drove like it was ... lightweight and nimble with reactions to driver input immediate.

This car works great under rotation and for an autocross, this appears to be the best way to get around smooth and fast. For the track, however, my trepidation took hold and there was no way I was going to test those limits with some big ol’ hairy slides. The Wilwoods did their job superbly and after a couple of laps, I found I didn’t have to brake very hard to slow the car down.

**HOW'D IT STACK UP?**

	SLALOM AVERAGE SPEED	SKIDPAD LATERAL g's	ROAD COURSE LAP TIME
<b>1965 CORVETTE</b> 3,170 POUNDS	48.7 mph	0.97 g	1:48.92
<b>2015 CAMARO SS 1LE</b> 3,866 POUNDS	47.2 mph	0.96 g	1:53.67

We put Brian Hobaugh’s 1965 Corvette through the wringer on the 420-foot slalom course, the Streets of Willow Springs road course, and the skidpad. And, because some of those numbers are a little ambiguous for those not familiar with the slalom or road course, we paired the car against a 2015 Camaro SS 1LE (which is their Track Pack) for comparison. The Camaro had all the modern technology, but the Corvette was lighter, smaller, and made more power. The 1LE Camaro was edged out by the Corvette on the skidpad and slightly bested in the slalom, but it was trounced on the road course, which says a lot about how sorted Brian’s Corvette is.





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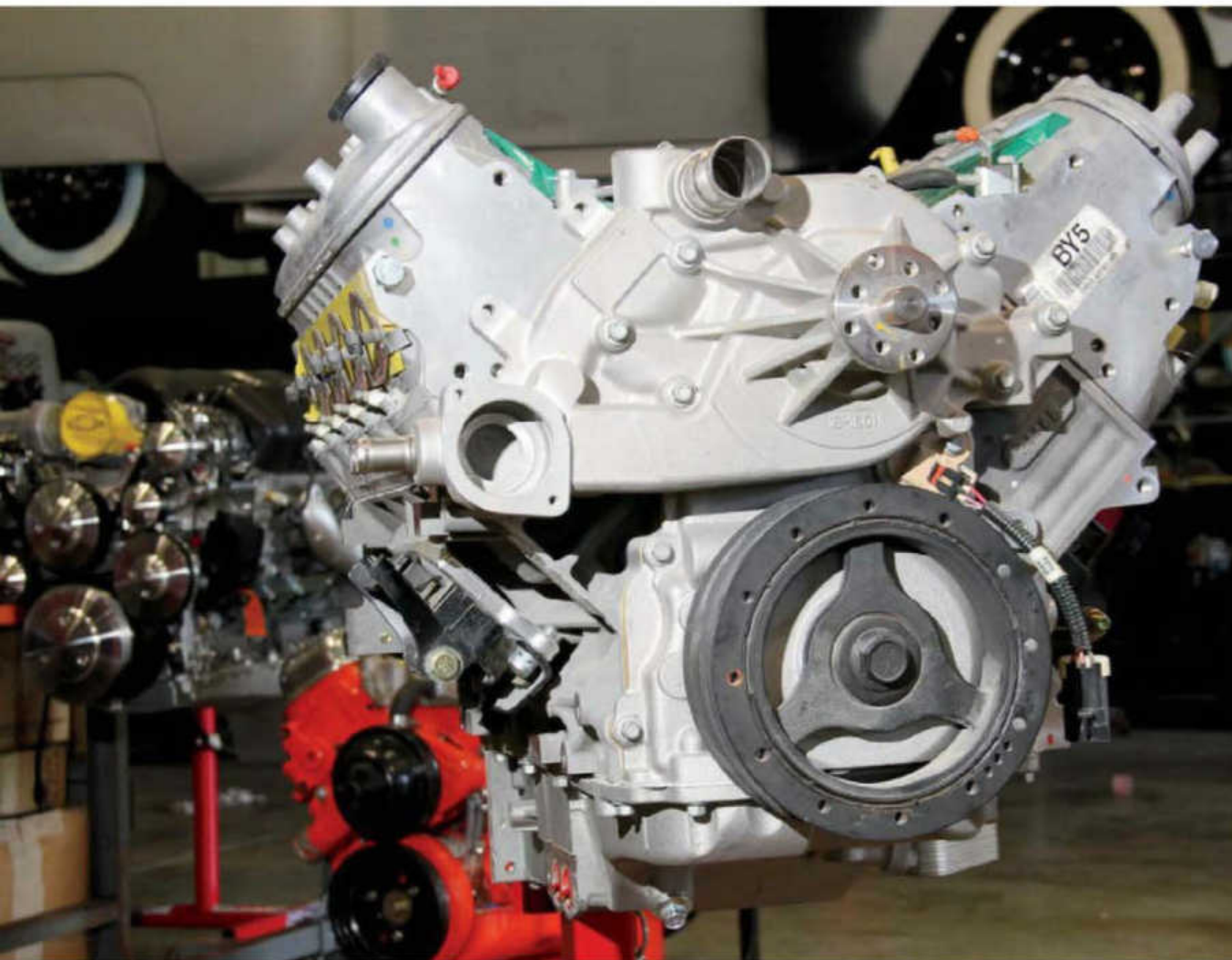
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# OIL SLICK

CONVERTING THE MARCH '57 CONVERTIBLE'S LS7 TO WET-SUMP



**It has been a** while since we did an installment of the March Performance '57 convertible build, but I can assure you it is undergoing some rather time-consuming metalwork prior to paint at this point. In the meantime, we decided to start turning our attention to the mechanical aspects of the build, including the Chevrolet Performance LS7 crate engine. As a showpiece for March Performance products, rather than a hard-core track car, the factory dry-sump lubrication system was a very unnecessary complication. It would require careful placement of a tank and the routing of lines in such a way that did not take away from the great lengths North Port Auto Body had already gone to to improve the engine bay's appearance. After much thought, it made sense with the overall build goals to simply replace the oil pan, pump, pickup, windage tray, and balancer. And thankfully, when we called Scoggin-Dickey Parts

Center, they have done so many of these that the crew hooked us up with every part we needed, including a spacer for the balancer (made in-house) and a slick Tech AFX guide to drill a hole for the dipstick.

For those ready to cry foul at such blasphemy, let's keep a few things in mind. The factory LS7 oiling system uses just a single pressure and suction stage as well as an oil pickup at the bottom of the pan, unlike an aftermarket system with crank scrapers and



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three or more stages. By having three or more stages, the necessary suction is created for vacuum in the crankcase sufficient for better ring sealing and windage. This is where the power gains come from dry-sump oiling systems. The factory LS7 system, on the other hand, does not have that benefit. What

it does accomplish, though, is to keep the engine in constant supply of oil in sustained, high-g cornering—like the long sweeping turns of Sebring Raceway—thanks to the vertical, external oil tank. With a set of sticky tires, the wet-sump pickup could be gulping air at the bottom of the pan instead of oil.

But, again, that was not a concern on this build. This Tri-Five will see street and show time mostly, wearing regular street tires. If you'd like the cubes, power, and prestige of an LS7, but don't plan on doing that much road racing, a wet-sump conversion is a wise plan. **G**



**1** To convert the Chevrolet Performance LS7 crate engine to wet-sump, Scoggin-Dickey Parts Center sent us the Muscle Car Oil Pan kit with a dipstick tube, windage tray, pickup, hardware, and gasket (PN 19212593) as well as an LS3 oil pump (PN 17801830) and crank sprocket (PN 12556582). In addition, they informed us that we would need an LS3 timing cover (PN 12600325), gasket, balancer, LS7/LS3 crank bolt (PN 11570163), and spacer.

**2** Scoggin-Dickey's crank spacer (left) accounts for the LS7's longer crank snout. The dipstick tube guide (right) from Tech AFX will allow you to drill through the block and create the necessary hole. Since the block was cast and machined to be dry-sump, there is no hole for the dipstick tube from the factory.

**3** We will be using a March Performance serpentine pulley system so we opted not to order the LS3 balancer. Instead, we'll be using a Fluidampr balancer as part of the kit. The March crank pulley will bolt to the front of the balancer. Fluidampr uses a silicone fluid (internally) to control harmonic vibrations and protect the crankshaft, main bearings, and other components.





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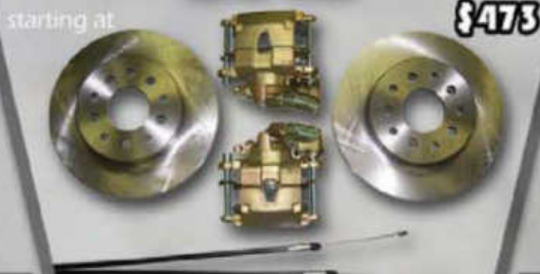


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**4**  
To start the install, Mike Morgenthaler at Saints & Sinners uses a three-jaw puller to remove the factory balancer.

**5**  
The water pump is also removed, with a 10mm socket.

**6**  
The engine is turned on an angle to access the oil pan and oil cooler bolts. Even after draining the pan, the engine still retains a lot of oil.

**7**  
Mike unbolted the windage tray to reveal the glorious six-bolt mains, forged crankshaft, and titanium rods. Notice all the writing? LS7s are hand-built in the Performance Build Center.

**8**  
The timing cover unbolts from the front of the engine to expose the front as well.

**9**  
You'll notice the bulky dry-sump pump is located in the same position as a standard wet-sump LS oil pump, but there is no pickup tube.



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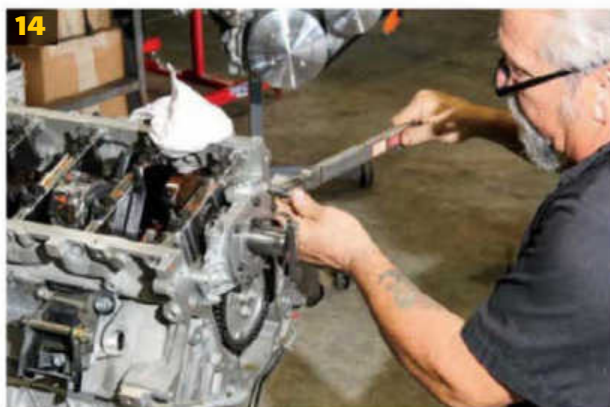
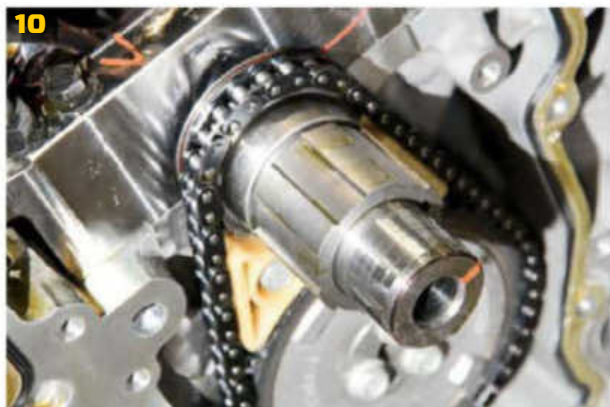
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**10**  
The LS7 oil pump uses a completely different drive gear and a longer crank snout than regular LS engines.

**11**  
After removing the timing chain, damper, and cam gear, Mike used a bearing splitter to pull off the oil pump gear.

**12**  
The old oil pump gear was then used to press on the new LS3 piece.

**13**  
Once fully seated, Mike put the timing chain and cam sprocket in place. Using some Loctite, the sprocket was fastened to the cam with 104 in-lb.

**14**  
The oil pump bolts requires a little more torque (18 ft-lb) along with 0.0002-inch clearance around the snout—hence the feeler gauge.

**15**  
The Tech AFX guide plate simply bolts into the oil pan boltholes so that Mike can use a 3/8-inch drill bit to create the dipstick tube hole. A vacuum and copious amounts of shop rags were used to catch all the metal shavings so that they didn't go into the engine. The hole needs to be countersunk to finish it off.



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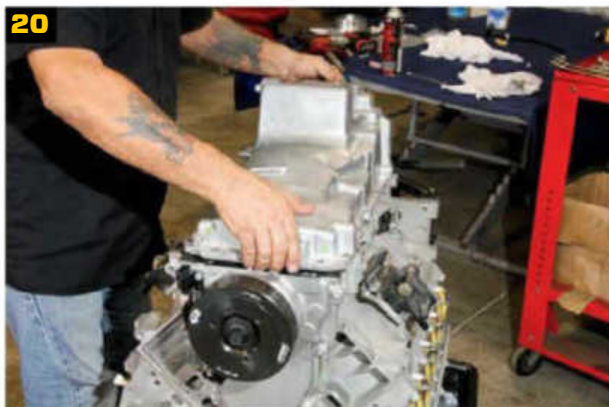
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**16**  
Once completed, Mike and owner Steve Ehrie test-fit the dipstick tube and check for debris.

**17**  
After the front cover is installed with an LS front cover alignment tool, the windage tray is bolted in place with washers to space it away from the crank. The LS3 tray was never intended for a 4-inch stroke, so you definitely want to turn the engine over a few times before buttoning it up.

**18**  
The pickup tube is secured with the nuts that hold the windage tray on the one side, and just one bolt to the oil pump itself (no, you didn't lose a bolt).

**19**  
Mike presses on the balancer using some serious elbow grease and your standard installation kit.

**20**  
The Chevrolet Performance Muscle Car Oil Pan is set into place with the gasket and a dollop of sealant at all four corners, then bolted down.

**21**  
While Steve holds the flexplate, Mike torques the LS7/LS3 crank bolt to 140 ft-lb with the crank spacer in place. The spacer goes on after the balancer but before the bolt. In fact, it is best to have it in place when you press on the balancer. You'll want to check the inside diameter and apply a little oil first.



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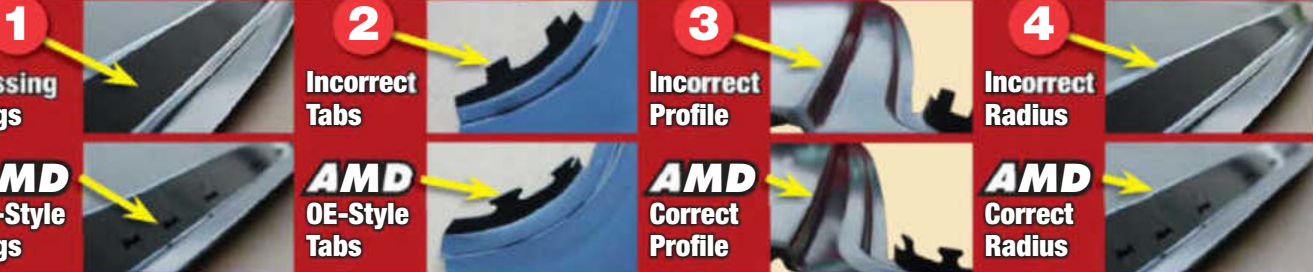
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**22**

With the install complete, you can see that the Muscle Car Oil Pan is a deep rear-sump setup designed to fit most popular applications. In case you are wondering, you will need to pick up a new LS3 oil filter.

**23**

Even up close, the dipstick hole looks factory.

**24**

Alas, the wet-sump conversion is complete, and this thing is nearly ready to bolt into the '57 convertible.

### SOURCES:

**Chevrolet Performance**  
chevroletperformance.com

**Saints & Sinners  
Hot Rod Shop**  
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**Scoggin-Dickey Parts Center**  
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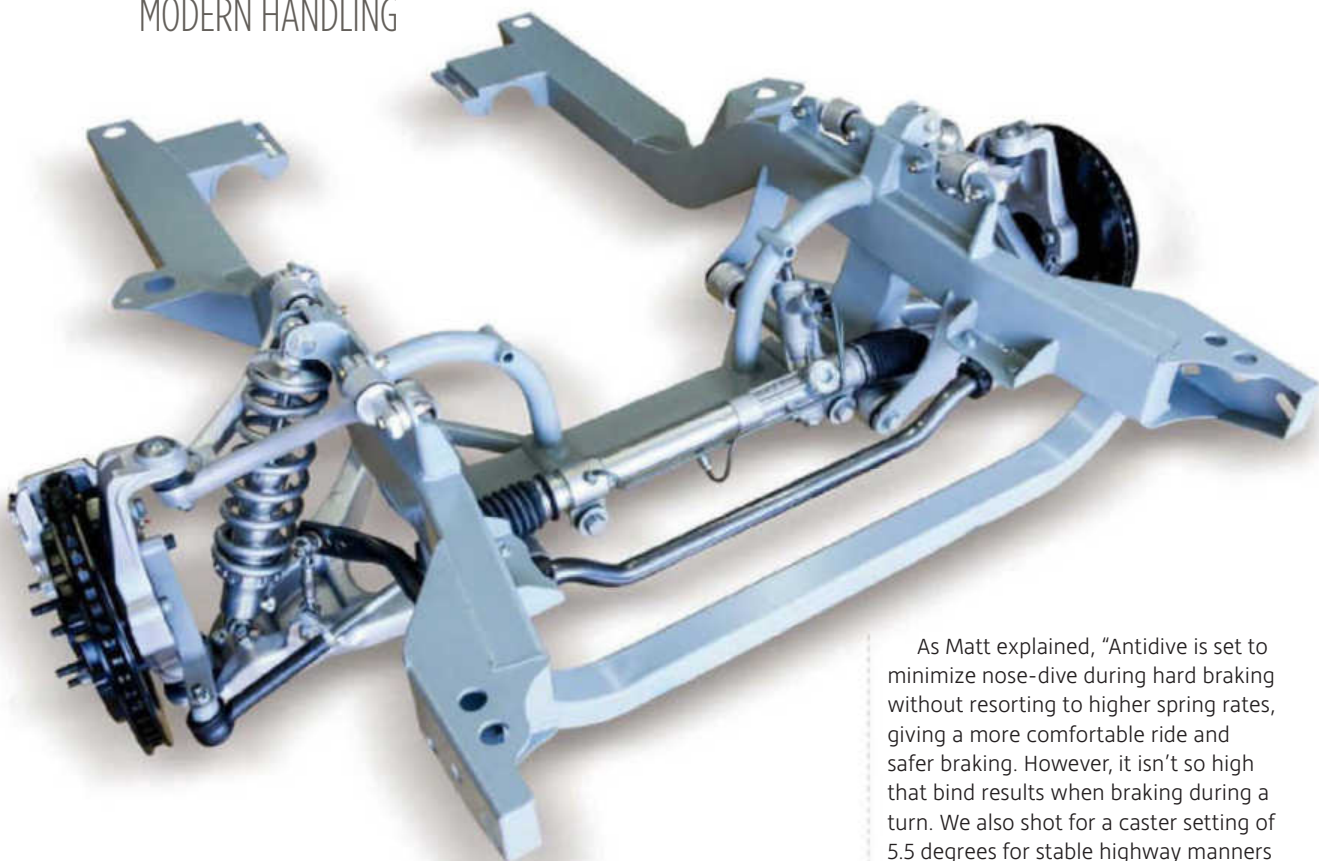
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**We ask a lot** of our classic Chevys. Sometimes, way more than the parts, designed nearly 50 years ago, can handle. This is especially true of the suspension. Modern cars have modern handling and we've come to expect this level of performance from our classics, as well. And, while a ton can be done to upgrade a suspension built around a stock subframe, it's still limited by its original design. Enter the aftermarket.

At some point suspension companies figured out that it would be advantageous to just ditch the whole OE subframe and design something better using modern materials, manufacturing techniques, and with increased performance in mind. The stock subframe in a 1967 Camaro was never designed for high-performance handling, but the aftermarket subframes being sold today had performance built into the equation from the get-go.

Art Morrison Enterprises (AME) saw the limitations of the stock subframe and, after listening to their customers, designed a subframe that would give our classics modern handling and performance capabilities. We asked their lead engineer, Matt Jones, to go over some of the technical highlights.

As Matt explained, "Antidive is set to minimize nose-dive during hard braking without resorting to higher spring rates, giving a more comfortable ride and safer braking. However, it isn't so high that bind results when braking during a turn. We also shot for a caster setting of 5.5 degrees for stable highway manners and positive steering feel where it still maintains a crisp turn-in, but the caster can be taken as high as 7 degrees if needed." He also stated that they spent a lot of time dialing in the right amount of camber gain. The goal was to have enough for track duty, but not so much that it would cause unnecessary camber thrust in bump. In addition, AME worked to minimize camber gain during braking so that more of the tire's footprint would stay planted to the asphalt, which yields shorter stopping distances.

Another design change—bringing in the 'rails 2 inches—allows the frame to accept the wider front tires favored by today's gearheads. In terms of suspension components, AME chose to go with parts from the newest generations



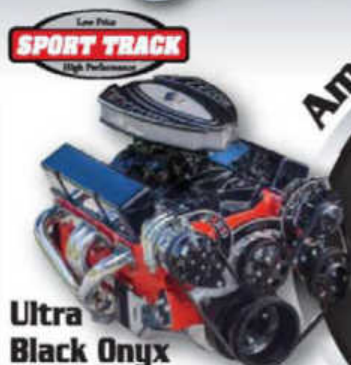
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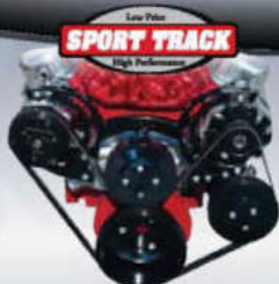


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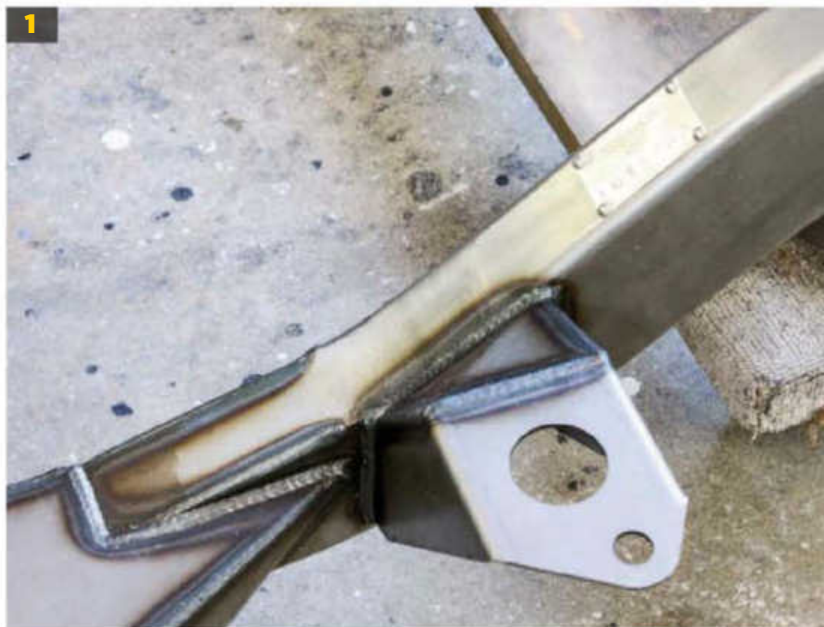


of Chevrolet's Corvette. Why? Simple, they had the right geometry, were track proven, lightweight, and would make it simple for their customers to find replacement parts just about anywhere. Starting from a clean slate also let AME easily add modern rack-and-pinion

steering without having to make suspension geometry compromises. The result is a subframe system that lets you easily inject 21st century handling into your 1960s era Chevy.

To get a closer look at one of their subframes we headed over to Best of

Show Coach Works to check out one getting slid under Mike Sevagio's 1967 Camaro RS. Mike's goal is to have a classic Camaro that drives and handles like a modern sports car, so updating the suspension was high on his list of "must dos." 



**1**

According to Matt Jones, Lead Mechanical Engineer at Art Morrison Enterprises (AME), "the framerails are mandrel bent to ensure proper wall thickness using materials that are only available to AME. When fully assembled the subframe is about 50 pounds lighter than stock."

**2**

AME offers a variety of transmission crossmembers to fit most any modern transmission. In this case it's to accommodate a Tremec Magnum six-speed. You can also spot how AME incorporated exhaust passageways to allow tubing to be tucked up into the frame instead of hanging below the framerails.

**3**

Instead of offering an old, and increasingly hard to find, rebuilt steering rack, AME supplied a much nicer 20:1 ratio Detroit Speed rack. Custom-tuned Woodward steering racks are also available as an option.

**4**

The AME subframe uses the same LS-engine adapter plates common to most aftermarket subframes. To this billet piece you just need to add a pair of Energy Suspension's small-block urethane mounts (PN 1114G).

**5**

Before tearing down the subframe for powdercoating, we decided to mock it up under our 1967 Camaro with a plastic LS fitment engine. Everything fit well, but many of the aftermarket headers we tried didn't clear or caused steering shaft issues. Our fix was to order up a set of Art Morrison LS headers made specifically to work with this subframe.

**6**

After having the subframe powdercoated in one of the 50 shades of gray offered by Embee Performance Coatings, we began installing all of the parts, starting with the power steering rack.

**7**

We were pretty surprised when the subframe showed up wearing C7 lower control arms instead of the C6 versions we were expecting. AME chose to go this route since the C7 pieces reduce unsprung weight by 2 pounds compared to C6 arms.





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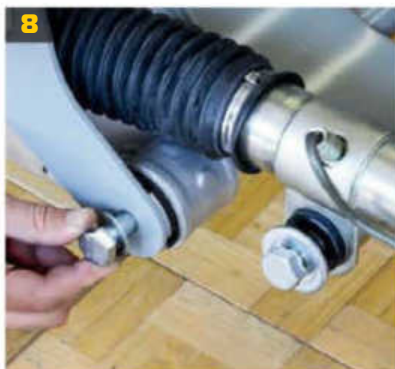
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**8** Using the supplied fasteners, we installed the lower control arms (LCA). The threaded bosses in the LCA and steering rack are manufactured using a unique process that produces stronger rolled threads instead of the more common cut type.

**9** Double-shear brackets are welded in place for the lower control arms to ensure proper strength in all situations. They also keep the bolts from walking out.

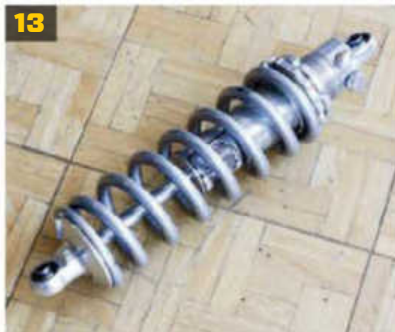
**10** We then mated the C7 Corvette upper control arms (UCA) to the freshly powdercoated AME subframe. As for the aluminum spacers, Jones explained, "The aluminum spacers between the UCA and the bracket are machined at a constant thickness that provides a decent alignment to get the car to an alignment rack. We recommend the customer leaves them in there, gets it aligned, and then measures the total thickness of all the shims used for each bolt. At that point you can have spacers machined at that thickness for a clean look. You could also have a set made for a more aggressive track alignment. That way you can swap them out to easily; switch between street and track alignments."

**11** Bridging the gap between the upper and lower Corvette control arms is the job of a C6 Corvette knuckle. These are quite a bit stronger than the geometrically identical C5 knuckles and offer a huge number of OE and aftermarket brake options. Our build had standard C6 bearing packs, but for hard track duty you can order stronger ZR1 SKF bearings.

**12** As Jones told us, "The AME-designed steering arm uses 8000-series chromium-moly steel (same material used for crankshafts and ring gears), which provides excellent strength while minimizing weight."

**13** AME offers several shock options, but the car's owner decided to try a set of Viking Crusader double-adjustable shocks.

**14** The lower end of the shock bolted in with a crossbar, just like a factory Corvette piece.







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**15**  
The upper eyelet of the Viking shock attached to the mount built into the AME subframe.

**16**  
We could then install the supplied outer tie-rod ends to the rack and attach them to the steering arms.

**17**  
Since this system uses a GM C6 Corvette steering knuckle, the options for brakes are vast. If you're on a tight budget a set of pull-off C6 brakes will bolt right up. We opted for a set of better looking, and performing, Wilwood binders. First up was installing the radial-mount caliper bracket.

**18**  
The 14-inch slotted and drilled two-piece rotor came in Wilwood's proprietary E-coat. After a few hard stops the black coating will come off of the braking surface and stay everywhere else, resulting in a rotor that keeps looking great.

**19**  
Rounding out our brakes was a pair of Wilwood Superlite 6 radial-mount calipers. The FSL6R calipers ditch the external fluid crossover tubes and instead utilize two additional bleed screws, which gives them greater installation flexibility. The differential piston bores ensure even pad pressure and wear.

**20**  
AME offers two sway bar options. For hard-core track use there's a splined sway bar option with aluminum bushing housings. We opted for the conventional type. The bar came with all the needed hardware, including steel bushing housings, urethane bushings, and retention clamp rings.

**21**  
The 1 1/8-inch hollow sway bar had three positions for adjustments to roll rates of up to 10 percent. The endlinks were also fully adjustable for preload.





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**22**  
And here's the finished passenger side. According to AME, the hub track is wider than stock to help nail a more ideal scrub radius, which in turn makes for excellent steering feedback and reduces steering system stress seen in racetrack use. You can easily run a 275mm wide tire without steering stops.

**23**  
With both sides assembled, we could roll the subframe under our Camaro and bolt it in place. AME strengthened critical body mounting areas by using thicker materials or additional bracing to limit flex. The subframe had alignment holes to get it close to square and then we measured to make sure it was perfectly square.

**24**  
We then dropped our Chevrolet Performance LS3 crate engine in place. As expected from our previous test-fit with the plastic version, everything fit great and there was plenty of clearance in critical areas like the oil pan to the rack and the back of the engine to the firewall.

**25**  
Our stainless steel AME headers showed up and we had them thermal coated by Embee Performance in Santa Ana, California. The headers use investment cast flanges and short radius bends combined with 321 stainless 1 7/8-inch tubing. Best of all, they fit perfectly and made running a steering shaft from the rack to the column easy.



### SOURCES:

**Art Morrison Enterprises (AME)**  
800-929-7188  
artmorrison.com

**Chevrolet Performance**  
chevrolet.com/performance

**Energy Suspension**  
949-361-3935  
energysuspension.com

**Viking Performance**  
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The installation of a blower is usually a one-day—or quicker—job that can pay huge dividends in power and torque. With a fuel-injected engine, optimized fueling is only a computer reflash away, but us old-school carburetor guys, specifically those with Holley 4150/4160 series carbs have a little bit more work to do before our engines will run correctly when boost hits.

The area in need of tweaking is the power valve. But, before we get into the mechanics of how to make the necessary changes, some background info on what the power valve does is required.

The power valve is a vacuum-operated fuel enrichment device that opens at low manifold vacuum (high engine load) conditions to direct more fuel to the carburetor's main enrichment circuit (this is what

ultimately flows out of the boosters) through the venturis and into the engine. At low engine load, such as idle or cruise, high vacuum in the manifold holds the power valve closed, keeping the mixture correctly lean. As the throttle blades open, allowing more air into the engine, the manifold vacuum drops, opening the power valve and providing the engine with the extra fuel it needs. All in all, it's a very simple and effective system.

Here's where things can get tricky: In a supercharged application, where the carburetor sits directly on top of the blower, the vacuum signal gets a bit muddled. As the engine accelerates and the blower begins to build boost in the manifold, the carburetor (specifically the power valve inside) can see additional vacuum. Because the blower is forcing larger quantities of air into the intake manifold than the engine could breathe on its own, there is a vacuum created at the base of the carburetor.

This can be a big problem, as the vacuum can be significant enough that the power valve will never open, starving the engine for fuel at high-load conditions (the worst time to run lean). A band-aid for the problem is to remove the power valve altogether and install a plug in its place. This requires larger (richening up) main jets (4-10 sizes) to compensate for the lack of a functional power valve, but almost always causes the engine to run very rich at part throttle.

A power valve plug can often work well in racing situations, where the engine only ever operates at wide-open throttle. However, it is a lousy compromise for street-driven



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engines that creates a less-than-ideal fuel curve.

The ideal solution to the problem is to “boost reference” the power valve. While that may sound intimidating, it is a very straightforward modification. Rather than feeding the power valve vacuum from just below the throttle plates, where added vacuum from the blower can occur, its feed can be relocated to underneath the blower in

the intake manifold. This ensures that the power valve sees accurate manifold vacuum and enriches the fuel circuit when the engine needs it most.

Check out the captions below to see how simple it is to boost reference any 4150/4160-style carb. Note: this modification does not work for blow-through carburetors, only draw-through setups, in which the carburetor sits on top of a roots-style blower. 



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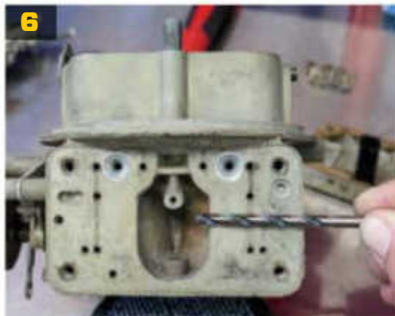
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**1**  
Here is our specimen, a very typical—and quite grungy—Holley 4150 carburetor. While this carb is clearly in need of a rebuild and thorough cleaning, we grabbed it to detail the process modifying for draw-through applications. This task is the same for any 4150/4160-style carb.

**2**  
The first step is to remove the fuel bowls and metering block from the carburetor to gain access to the power valve well.

**3-4**  
With the fuel bowls removed, we can see the well where the power valve resides. The small hole (indicated) is the feed hole that directs vacuum to the power valve. This will need to be plugged.

**5**  
Here is a standard Holley power valve. Vacuum exerted on the diaphragm side holds the valve closed until it drops to a specified level (usually 6.5 inches of Hg) where the spring overpowers the vacuum, opening the valve.

**6**  
In order to provide the power valve with an accurate vacuum signal, we needed to route it underneath the blower. To do this, we drilled a small hole from the outside of the carb into the power valve well, making sure we didn't breach any internal passages and that the hole would not interfere with the power valve itself.

**7**  
Here is where we chose to drill our new feed hole (located on the throttle-side-primary of the carb).

**8**  
Use a sharp drill bit and go slowly. Breaking the bit off in the carb could really ruin your day ... and your carb.

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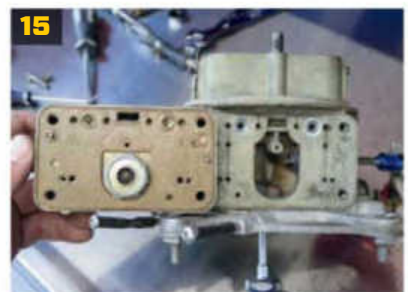
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**9**

Here you can see just how the new vacuum port will feed the power valve

**10**

A scrap piece of steel 3/16-inch steel brake line was used to complete the new power valve feed. We coated it in sealant and lightly tapped it into the hole we drilled. We decided to add a -3 AN fitting to the end of our new vacuum feed. This makes for a more precision look, though a bit of rubber hose would have accomplished the same task.

**11**

This neat, AN flaring tool from Speedway Motors was used to ready the brake line for a -3 AN fitting.

**12**

Our new power valve vacuum feed was done, but we still needed to plug the old feed. For that, we used some quick-curing gas tank epoxy. Two-part epoxies, such as JB Weld, will also get the job done, but we liked that this epoxy was designed with gasoline resistance in mind. There shouldn't directly be gasoline in the chamber, but some vapor will inevitably be in the air.

**13**

Here is a close-up of the power valve well with a dab of epoxy blocking the old power valve feed and a small donut of it adding additional sealing to the brake line we used for the new feed.

**14**

We kept all of our bits and pieces in order to make reassembly quick and easy. This job doesn't require too much of the carb be removed but it's a good practice to keep.

**15**

Here you can see the back of the metering block and how the power valve will sit in the modified well.

**16**

We reassembled our Holley, though it will come apart for a full rebuild in the very near future.

**17**

Our finished carb is ready to top a blower. However, in order for this modification to work properly, the feed will need to be routed to underneath the blower via a vacuum port in the intake manifold. Forget to hook that up and the power valve will stay shut always, effectively voiding all your hard work!





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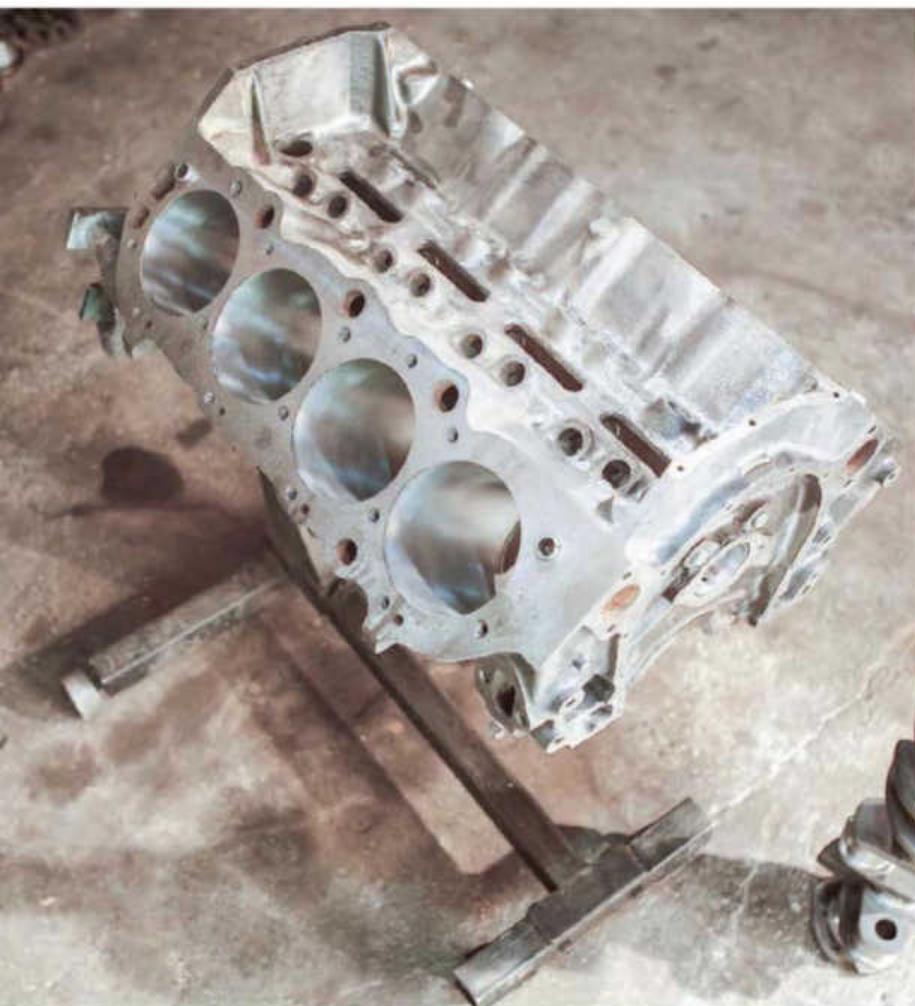
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# DIFFERENT STROKES

HOW TO CLEARANCE A BIG-BLOCK CHEVY FOR A STROKER CRANK



**It's no secret that** the easiest way to make more horsepower is to bump up the size of your engine. And, since an engine can only be overbored so much, the next, most logical, step is to install a longer stroke crankshaft. Easy, right?

Compared to what engine builders from decades past had to go through, upping the displacement of an engine has never been easier. For early hot rodders, there were no aftermarket stroker cranks. The path to bigger cubic inches and more horsepower was a lot more difficult.


Racers of yore had to turn to offset grinding and scouring the junkyards for salvageable factory parts. Boy, we're lucky those days are over!

But, what do you do with a stroker crank once it shows up, neatly packaged, on your porch? Even though many of these pieces are designed to drop right into a production block without any massaging at all, due to production variances, at the very least you will need to check to make sure all of the rotating assembly components play nice with each other—and the block. In the case of more aggressive stroke lengths, some amount of grinding on a production-based block is almost always necessary.

To demonstrate the process, we got our hands on a seasoned Mark IV 454 big-block Chevy to serve as a guinea pig. The block was sent out to L&R Engine in Santa Fe Springs, California, where it was hot tanked, mag'd, line honed, and sonic checked. The guys at L&R gave it a clean bill of health and punched it 0.100-inches over for a final bore size of 4.350 inches. Not all blocks can be machined this large so it is important to have your machinist verify wall thickness before you proceed.

Next, and with a displacement goal of 520 cubic inches, we called up Scat Enterprises for a forged, 4.375-inch stroker crank (PN 445426) and a set of Pro Series 6.385-inch connecting rods (PN 26385716).

Mahle supplied a set of 1.270-inch compression height, domed pistons (PN BBC270350D18) to complete the rotating assembly.

Next, with all of the puzzle pieces in-hand, it was time to make them work in harmony with the block. We dusted off the die grinder and grabbed a fresh set of stone wheels and carbide bits in preparation for the mess we were about to make. Follow along as we prep our big block for stroker duty and stay tuned, as we'll be assembling this big-boy soon. 



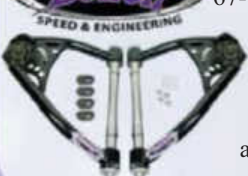


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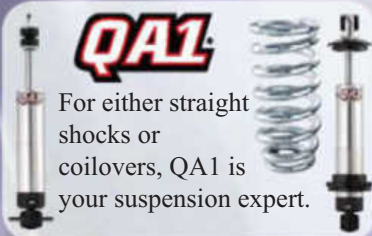


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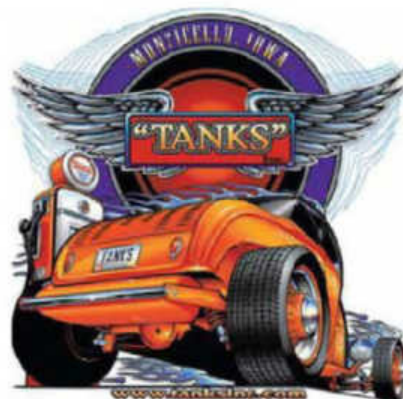


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**1** There was a time when adding displacement to an engine was a lot more complicated. We are fortunate nowadays to have stroker cranks, such as this Scat 4.375-inch stroke unit, ready for order.

**2** Here is our patient, a production 454 big-block bored to 4.350-inches by L&R Engine in Santa Fe Springs, CA, ready to go under the knife.

**3** Here's the arsenal of tools anyone building a stroker engine should have at the ready: a reliable air/electric die grinder, with both a carbide and stone bit, a means to mark the block for clearancing (we used a yellow grease pen), and a set of bearings to locate the crank and rods in the block.

**4** Here is the Mahle piston and Scat connecting rod package that will see duty in our 520ci-soon-to-be. For any stroker engine, you will need to assemble one piston and rod to check block clearance in every cylinder.

**5** L&R Engine line-honed our seasoned block back to perfection. To make sure we didn't screw up their hard work, we numbered each cap so that it can be reinstalled in the same location as it was machined in.

**6** Our Mahle 1.270-inch compression height stroker pistons use wire locks to locate the wristpin. From this picture, you can also tell that the pin intersects the oil ring, meaning these pistons will use a support rail in the lowest ring groove.

**7** With our piston assembled, it was time to drop it into the block and see what sort of clearance issues we would be working with.

**8** A set of scrap main and rod bearings are a great way to clearance a stroker engine. However, it is important to make sure they are the correct size for the crank you will be using.

**9** We used a set of old bearings, but we didn't want to scuff the new Scat crank during our clearancing operations. To prevent that, all of the bearings were liberally coated with Driven XP9 oil before installing the crank or rods.



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12



13



14





15



16



10

It isn't necessary to install all of the main bearings to clearance for the longer stroke crank, but using the thrust bearing is a must. Without it, the crank will be able to wander back and forth and could cause some confusion as to where clearancing needs to take place.

11

With a main bearing on the rear and front caps and plenty of lubrication, we dropped our new stroker crank into the block and reinstalled our ARP bolts to hold the caps in place.

12

When installing the rods and pistons into the block, make sure the chamfer side of the rod faces the filet (outside edge) of the crank journal. Failure to do this will cause the rod cap to ride in the wrong place and may have you grinding the block in an incorrect spot!

13

With an appropriate rod bearing installed, slip the rod into the first cylinder and install the cap.

14

With the rod in place, we rotated the crank until resistance was felt. We then used a yellow grease pen to mark the block where it was contacting the connecting rod. We pulled the connecting rod and crank out of the block and hit the marked spot with the die grinder.

15

The scallops for the factory rod bolts actually had plenty of clearance already, as did the pan rails. The only spots we needed to clearance were at the bottom of the even bank of cylinders, though all blocks are slightly different.

16

This double-cut-style die made short work of the offending cast iron. One of these makes the job of clearancing a block go much quicker. However, don't go too quick or you could scuff a cylinder wall!



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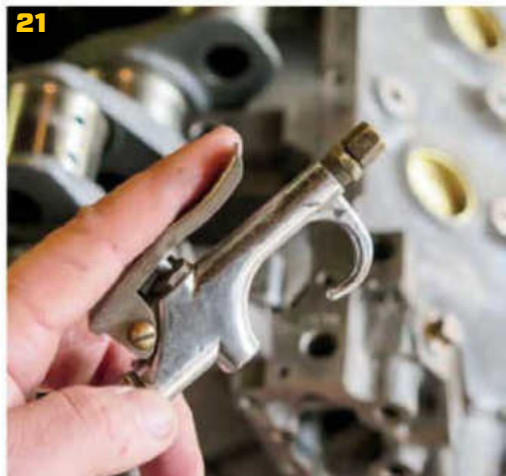
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17

This spot on the bottom of the even bank cylinder bores was where most of the clearancing was needed.

18

Here is a roughed out clearance notch for where the bottom of the connecting rod bolt was clipping the block.

19

We went back over the rough cut from the die grinder bit with a stone wheel to clean it up. We put a slight chamfer on the notch and removed any sharp edges. A sharp edge can catch the thrust side of the piston and cause premature wear.

20

The block will need to be thoroughly cleaned after all of the clearance work has been completed. Just look at the metal shavings hiding out in the rearmost cam bearing. Ideally, have the engine hot tanked one more time before assembly.

21

If you intend to do the cleaning yourself, a good blowgun is paramount. Also, remove the rear cam plug and oil gallery plugs so they can be blown out and pipe brushed.

22

Here you can see where our Mahle piston actually comes out of the deck surface 0.042-inches. There's a method to this madness that we'll detail when we assemble this monster. Stay tuned!

## SOURCES:

**L&R Engine**  
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**1  
TIM BAIR**

**1967 CAMARO RS/SS**

Quick Take: Originally factory-equipped with a 396, Tim's 1967 Camaro RS/SS convertible, badged with 427 emblems and stock SS hood, is now running a 496-inch big-block with Turbo 400 and original 12-bolt posi with 3.73 gears. The color is Bolero Red and the wheels are vintage Cragar SS. The brightwork was handled by California Polishing & Chrome.

**2  
BRANDY FREEMAN**

**2013 CAMARO RS/SS**

Quick Take: Or should we say, "short and sweet," Brandy's 2013 Camaro RS/SS was photographed in a parking lot near the Charlotte Motor Speedway by her husband Donnie.

**3  
BARRY KREMLING**

**1966 EL CAMINO**

Quick Take: Customized with SS396 badging, Barry's 1966 El Camino has a 454-inch big-block with a beefed TH350 automatic transmission. The interior is black with Super Sport bucket seats and console.

**4  
MATTHEW HUTTON**

**1982 CAMARO**

Quick Take: A gift from his father, Matthew spent 12 years customizing and restoring his 1982 Camaro Z28. Under the hood rests a Chevrolet Performance 350 equipped with long-tube Hedman headers, MSD ignition, and K&N air filter. Suspension upgrades include Eibach springs, KYB shocks, and UMI control arms with a BMR relocation kit.

**5  
STEVE BROWN**

**1966 CHEVELLE**

Quick Take: Originally red, with the color now changed to Black Granite, Steve and his wife, Julie, bought their 1966 Chevelle Malibu convertible with 53,000 miles on it. It's one of 230 built for the Canadian market. Under its SS396 hood is a rebuilt 283 with a 700-R4 replacing the original Powerglide transmission.

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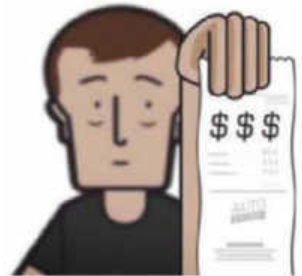




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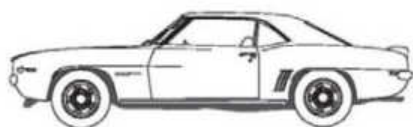
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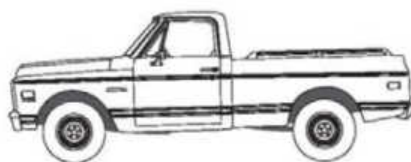
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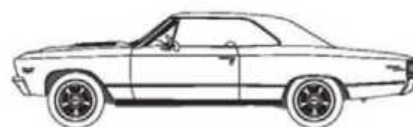
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